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LINCOLN'S LEGACY

On Feb. 12, National Commander Dan Dellinger joined Legionnaires from eight states for Springfield, Ill., Post 32's annual Pilgrimage to the Tomb of Abraham Lincoln, a tradition since 1935. The delegation placed 20 wreaths at the base of Lincoln's bust, and Dellinger spoke of the 16th president's pledge to care for veterans. Photo by Lucas Carter

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The American Legion Magazine, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its 2.4 million members. These wartime veterans, working through 14,000 community-level posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.

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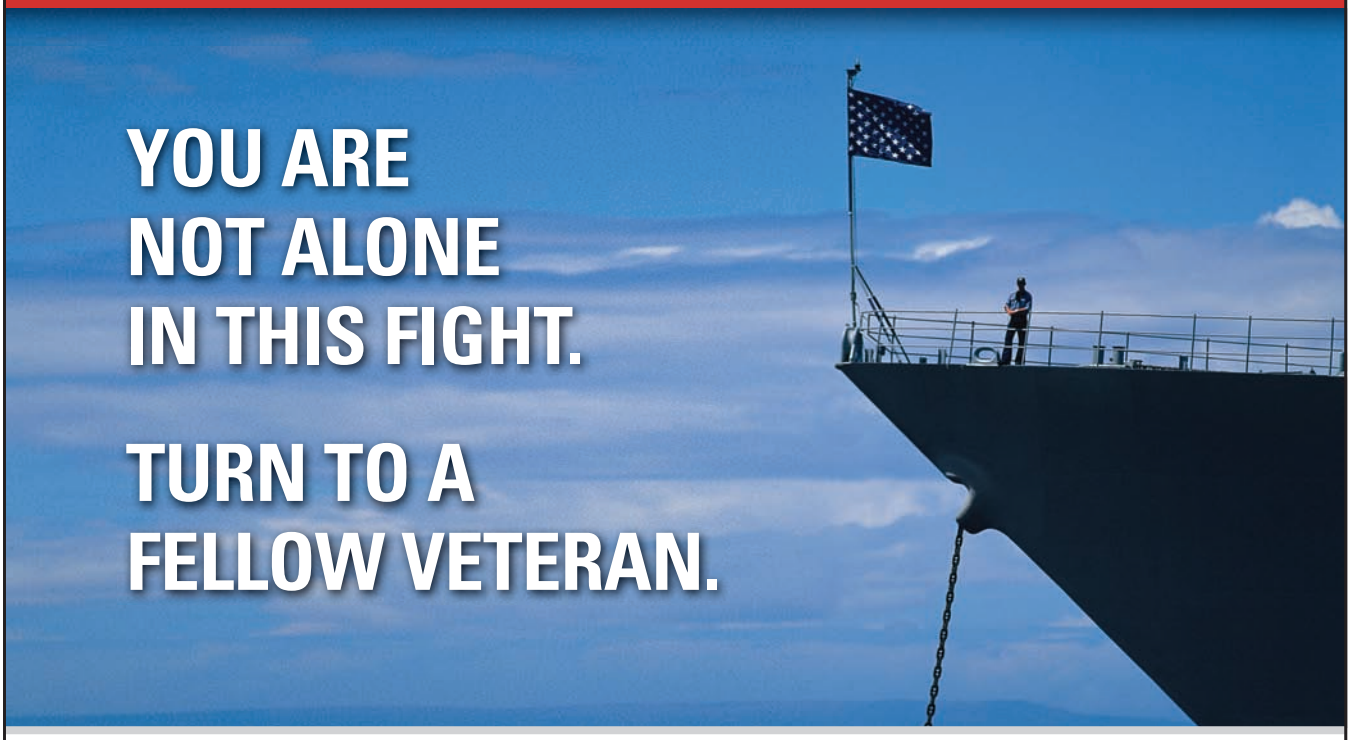

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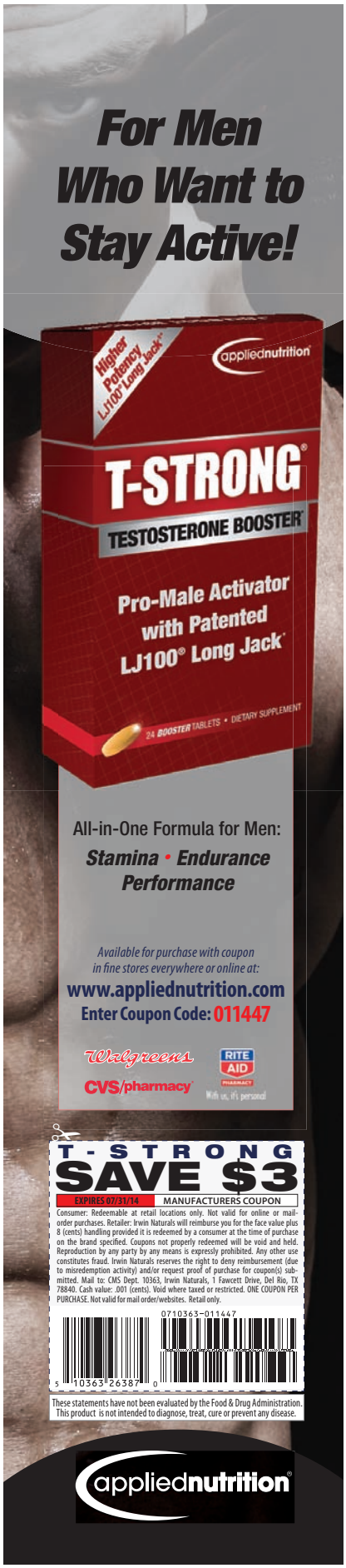
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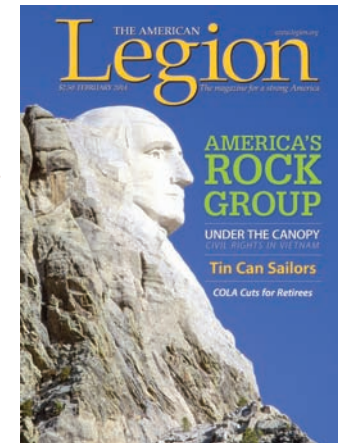

As mentioned by Alan W. Dowd (February), Mount Rushmore was created as a tribute and memorial to four great men – Roosevelt, Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln – who gave their all to help America become the nation it is today. I believe Rushmore should stay as it is.

Yes, Franklin Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan made efforts and moves to strengthen and establish our relationships around the world. But I believe adding any other faces would not add that much to Rushmore's meaning. I also believe it would cause political controversies as to why we wouldn't add someone just because he was a popular president. Leave Rushmore as it is, so that we and future generations can remember and respect our American heritage as these four men envisioned it.

– Sam Conrad, Cape Girardeau, Mo.

I liked most of this article, except for the defending of FDR's unconstitutional policies. Everyone who serves or has served in the military has taken an oath to "support and defend the Constitution of the United States." To say that FDR went far outside the Constitution would be an understatement. Had he allowed the private sector and the "invisible hand" to correct the economy, we as a nation would be far better off. The Atlantic Charter was the start of many "entangling alliances" that have helped destroy our economy and ruin our standing overseas.

The founders never intended the government to envision a postwar world "founded on freedom from want and freedom from fear." There is no place for FDR beside the great presidents on Mount Rushmore.

– Bob Baker, Westlake Village, Calif.

In 1868, the Treaty of Fort Laramie gave the Lakota possession of the Black Hills "in perpetuity" – which came to mean until the white Americans found some reason to grab it from them. Tin and gold were both found in the Black Hills, and in 1885 a New York lawyer named Charles Rushmore went there to check on some mining claims. In exploring the area, he asked the name of one particular hill. Told it had no name, he thought it would be nice to have it named after him. No one asked the Lakota, who considered the hill a sacred place. Indeed, it had a name: "Six Grandfathers."

Native Americans in that region have been resentful ever since, especially when Gutzon Borglum started blasting away at their sacred mountain to display the faces of four U.S. presidents. Dowd explains why those four were chosen, and I don't argue with that. I do, however, think we tend to take places like Mount Rushmore for granted and fail to understand why the Lakota and other Native Americans might feel differently about this monument. In any case, I believe that to add additional sculptures would be another slap in the face to the Lakota in particular and to other American Indian nations as well.

– George R. Nugent, Milton, N.H.

'A Place to Gather ... and Much More'

Kudos to Steve B. Brooks for his outstanding and informative article (February). I was a Legionnaire for many years pre-integration and was a member of black Legion posts (or BLPs) of yesteryear. In small towns and communities, BLPs were without a doubt the center of activity. What made this possible was the fact that all post members, including commanders, were not strangers. They were known by all. Camaraderie was at its highest.

This article brought back many poignant memories.

– Lawrence Phillips Sr., Houston

Steve Brooks' article says that Dorie Miller was awarded the Navy's Silver Cross, but the Navy has no such award. Miller was awarded the Navy Cross.

– John Chalus, Atco, N.J.

'Sailors United'

Bravo Zulu for the article by Matt Chandler (February) about the Tin Can Sailors. As a longtime member of the Tin Can Sailors Association, I can say without reservation that this is one of the finest veterans organizations with which I have ever been associated. Terry Miller and his staff have done an extraordinary job of keeping us old sailors not only current on Navy news but maintaining an interest in our history as well.

Unfortunately, new membership from officers and crews of modern destroyers is not what one would hope. My ship, USS *Shannon* – a *Sumner*-class destroyer converted to a high-speed minelayer in 1944 – is among many World War II-and-later Tin Cans no longer in existence, except in our memories. The modern destroyers (*Arleigh Burke*-class DDGs) are so different in overall size and displacement, weaponry and technology that it is hard to draw a relationship to them as Tin Cans. Still, the association gladly welcomes them. This would also ensure that the magnificent tradition dating from USS *Bainbridge* up to and through current (and future) destroyer classes will endure.

In closing, I commend all the veterans who are keeping their museum ships alive and well. An extra-hearty Bravo Zulu to them.

– Jack Duegaw, Stafford, Va.

I too was on *The Sullivans* on that fateful day it went to sea looking for *Thresher*. This exercise was matched in intensity only by our participation in the Cuban blockade.

I went aboard in early 1962 as the anti-submarine warfare officer, then progressed to head of Weapons, Ops and acting XO for three months, which included a six-week training deployment to Puerto Rico. We trained future Tin Can officers on board *The Sullivans* since it served as the Navy's destroyer school afloat.

I share the warm feelings of all those who served aboard *The Sullivans* and now look after it as it enjoys a well-earned rest. I look forward to going to Buffalo and walking around the decks once again.

– Vincent S. Averna, McLean, Va.

On Legion chaplains

I read the excellent article by National Commander Dan Dellinger about Four Chaplains Sunday (Commander's Message, February). He writes about posts commemorating the event in some way; if I am chaplain next year, I will do just that. I am proud to be a member of an organization that acknowledges our nation's religious foundation and the blessings continually received from our Creator.

– Gerry Kern, Austin, Texas

Non-discrimination act

In the mid-'80s, I served as orthopedic surgeon at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi. My best corpsman was drummed out of the service for being gay. Thank goodness the military has come to its senses. Shame on Rep. Joseph Pitts (Big Issues, February) for claiming that "religious freedom" prevents supporting this act. His religious freedom should not abridge the human rights of others.

– Christine Indech, Peachtree Corners, Ga.

Here's what the Senate is really saying with this non-discrimination act: "We're going to grant special anti-discrimination rights to groups and organizations that we like, support or care about: homosexuals, lesbians, multisexuals and transgenders. In doing so, we are declaring that it's OK to discriminate against all other U.S. citizens not included in this list." Since when do we have to be associated with some sort of group to be granted equal protection from anything?

– John Nowak, Birmingham, Mich.

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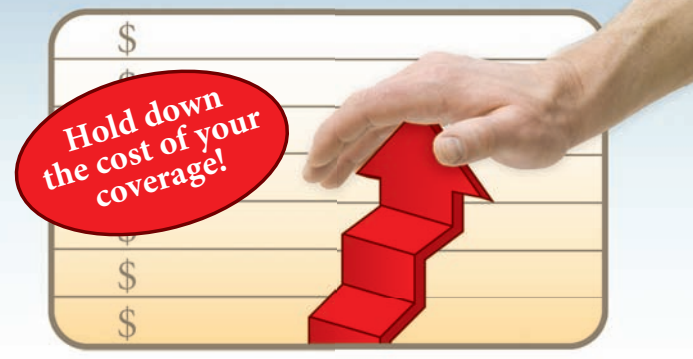

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Someone's going to jump for membership

As a U.S. Army soldier during the Vietnam War, Art Schwabe never had to jump out of an airplane. Neither did Mike McDaniel, who served in the Marine Corps from 1975 to 2004. That lack of experience is bound to change after May.

At the Florida American Legion convention last summer, Commander Schwabe announced that if the state's membership exceeds 108 percent of its year-end target, he will do something inspired by one of his favorite movies, "The Bucket List." He will skydive. To make things interesting, he upped the ante by committing McDaniel, the department adjutant, to parachute with him if numbers pass 110 percent. McDaniel had no idea the challenge was coming, but adjutants are used to getting roped into such things. "Sometimes you have to do fun and crazy things to fire people up," Schwabe says.

By mid-February, Florida membership was hovering around the 90-percent mark with three months to go. Orange T-shirts were made, each featuring a cartoon rendering of Schwabe pulling McDaniel out of a plane – the adjutant pleading with him, "We haven't validated the numbers yet!" (The airport and plane have already been reserved, by the way.) Moreover, Florida Legionnaires are buzzing about the wager, signing up members and looking forward to the big jump.

This is one example of the ways Legionnaires are making membership recruiting fun and interesting this year. Last fall, the Indiana American Legion invested in a television and radio campaign that included a marketing relationship with the NFL's Indianapolis Colts and booth space at Lucas Oil Stadium. One of the TV ads told the story of a post-9/11 veteran who needed help after a job offer fell through. The Legion found him a place and helped him stage a successful new job search. The young veteran happily shared his story before TV cameras, proudly wearing his Legion cap and urging others to join.

Indiana, Illinois, Missouri and Wisconsin are also now locked in membership bets that involve pizza, cheese, ham and NFL jerseys.

Last year, the Legion's Membership & Post Activities Committee unveiled a five-year blueprint for growth as we near the organization's 100th anniversary. States stepped up with their own five-year plans. And those plans appear to be working. One post in New York, for instance, stood at 268 percent of target by the middle of February. Such growth is essential to the Legion's mission, especially now.

Nearly 1.5 million members of the nation's armed forces will soon leave the service and come home, needing their fellow veterans. They may want assistance. They may want to offer it. Some will be interested in hitting the road with the Legion Riders. Others will help with Junior Shooting Sports, volunteer at VA hospitals, or speak to schoolchildren about military service. Many new veterans will just want someone to talk to. Whatever their interests, we need to welcome them home in great numbers, invite their involvement, share our legacy and enlist their advice in establishing a vision for the next century, which belongs to them and their own recruitment plans – with or without parachutes.

National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger

MEMORANDA

ONLINE TOOLS FOR MEMBERSHIP RECRUITERS

The American Legion's national website recently launched a new recruitment platform that includes:

- Post, district and department success stories, which can be submitted online at ***www.legion.org/legiontown***
- Incentive awards and application forms from National Headquarters
- Downloadable full-color booklets about the value of membership
- Recruitment tips on video from experts Frank Carr of Virginia, Jim Fiedler of Montana, Mike Bowen of New York and Denise Rohan of Wisconsin
- Department-by-department standings

www.legion.org/recruiting

THE NEW LEGION APP

A new American Legion mobile app – available free of charge on the iPhone App Store and on Google Play – includes a brief description of the organization's mission, a post locator with maps and directions, an easy link to join and much more.

www.legion.org/mobileapps

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"Our organization needs people who are going to go out and recruit and sell our organization to the community. And I enjoy doing it."

AL FORD

Al Ford first went to an American Legion post while on a double date. He liked it and joined. Then he found something he liked just as much: asking others to join.

Over the years, Ford has either started or revitalized approximately 150 Legion posts in Michigan.

"There is a need for what I do," he says. "Our organization needs people who are going to go out and recruit and sell our organization to the community. And I enjoy doing it. I have a wife – we will soon be married 60 years – who travels with me and allows me to continue to do this."

There's no magic to why Ford has stayed a Legionnaire for 50 years. "I think the bug bit me or something," he says. "I think The American Legion stands for more than having a good time. We have work to do in the community. Teach patriotism to our children. We've got a lot of veterans in our communities who need help. We need to be out there talking to (veterans), welcoming them back home. That's our mission."

Watch an interview with Al Ford online:

www.legion.org/magazine

BRANCH OF SERVICE
U.S. Air Force (1951-1955, 1960-1964)

MOS Military police/ flight safety instructor

RANK AT DISCHARGE
Technical sergeant

AMERICAN LEGION POST
Post 282, Ypsilanti, Mich.

YEARS IN THE LEGION 50

VETERANS ACTIVITIES

- Post commander
- Department commander
- National Executive Committeeman
- Alternate National Executive Committeeman
- Department post development chairman

Photo by Thomas Holman

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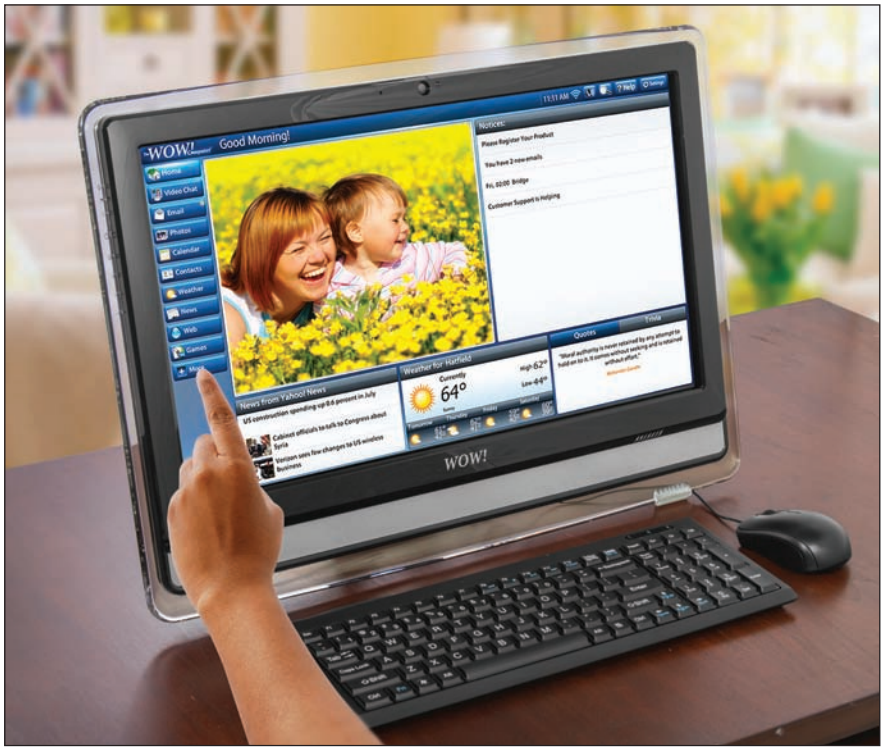

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– Janet F.

Have you ever said to yourself "I'd love to get a computer, if only I could figure out how to use it." Well, you're not alone. Computers were supposed to make our lives simpler, but they've gotten so complicated that they are not worth the trouble. With all of the "pointing and clicking" and "dragging and dropping" you're lucky if you can figure out where you are. Plus, you are constantly worrying about viruses and freeze-ups. If this sounds familiar, we have great news for you. There is finally a computer that's designed for simplicity and ease of use. It's the WOW Computer, and it was designed with you in mind. This computer is easy-to-use, worry-free and literally puts the world at your fingertips. From the moment you open the box, you'll realize how different the WOW Computer is. The components are all connected; all you do is plug it into an outlet and your high-speed Internet connection. Then you'll see the screen – it's now 22 inches. This is a completely new touch screen system, without the cluttered look of the normal computer screen. The "buttons" on the screen are easy to see and easy to understand. All you do is touch one of them, from the Web, Email, Calendar to Games– you name it… and a new screen opens up. It's so easy to use you won't have to ask your children or grandchildren for help. Until now the very people who could benefit most from E-mail and the Internet are the ones that have had the hardest time accessing it. Now, thanks to the WOW Computer, countless older Americans are discovering the wonderful world of the Internet every day. Isn't it time you took part? Call now, and a patient, knowledgeable product expert will tell you how you can try it in your home for 30 days. If you are not totally satisfied, simply return it within 30 days for a refund of the product purchase price. Call today.

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Change Senate filibuster rules

SUPPORT

Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt.

■ Leahy is chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee and president pro tempore of the Senate.

The Constitution provides that the president, with the advice and consent of the Senate, nominates qualified individuals to serve as judges and in the executive branch. Such "advice and consent" has traditionally meant that only nominees with extreme views – liberal and conservative – would be denied confirmation votes in the Senate.

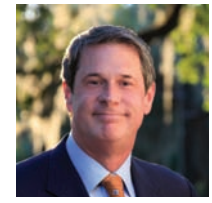
But over the past five years, Republicans have changed the tradition of the Senate with their escalating obstruction of both judicial and executive nominations. This was apparent when they filibustered the nomination of Chuck Hagel, a former Republican senator, for secretary of defense. Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed.

More recently, this abuse was displayed when the Republicans filibustered Patricia Millett to serve as a judge on the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals. Millett has earned her place among the best lawyers in the country, arguing 32 cases before the Supreme Court. But rather than support her nomination, Republicans prevented the Senate from even debating her and two others' qualifications. With this escalating obstruction, the nation's courts are facing persistent vacancies, forcing fewer judges to take on growing caseloads and threatening Americans' access to justice.

The Senate recently voted to change its procedures to overcome this unprecedented obstruction. I have always believed in the Senate's unique protection of the minority party and in the importance of both parties working together. I hope Republicans will join Democrats in restoring the Senate's ability to consider many other qualified nominees, so that the Senate can get back to fulfilling its constitutional role of serving the American people.

THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

Last fall, Senate Democrats changed the body's rules to pass judicial and executive nominees with a simple majority vote. Republicans call it a partisan power grab, saying it takes away the voice of the minority party and millions of Americans.



OPPOSE

Sen. David Vitter, R-La.

■ Vitter is chairman of the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

It's no secret that the Senate has been exceptionally combative in recent years. I pin a lot of the frustration to one key vote: Obamacare, which was jammed through the Senate without compromise on a pure party-line vote. Unfortunately, Senate Democrats have continued this pattern of uncompromising behavior with a rules change known as the "nuclear option."

A rules change has historically required a two-thirds vote, but that's exactly the rule Democrats threw away when they employed the nuclear option. This change passed in the same brass-knuckles manner as Obamacare. This isn't just a shame for the Senate; it's scary for our country because it takes away the voice of the minority party and the millions of Americans it represents.

Even before Obamacare, Senate Democrats blocked votes on many Republican ideas. They may disagree with Republicans, but our ideas and constituents deserve to be heard. The vote against the change was actually bipartisan, with three Democrats joining Republicans.

Democrats have tried to justify this rules change by complaining that judicial nominations aren't getting approved. But this just isn't the case. Eighty-six percent of President Obama's executive and judicial nominations have been confirmed – a notably higher confirmation rate than the 67 percent confirmed under President George W. Bush.

The Democratic majority is trying to distract people from Obamacare – but rather than fix it, they've doubled down on the partisan power politics that produced it. We need to go back to the original Senate rules and give all Americans a voice, not just the party in charge.

CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

The Honorable *(name)*, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510 • Phone: (202) 224-3121
The Honorable *(name)*, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515 • Phone: (202) 225-3121

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ELIQUIS is a prescription medicine used to reduce the risk of stroke and blood clots in people who have atrial fibrillation, a type of irregular heartbeat, not caused by a heart valve problem.

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- **Do not stop taking ELIQUIS without talking to the doctor who prescribed it for you. Stopping ELIQUIS increases your risk of having a stroke.** ELIQUIS may need to be stopped, prior to surgery or a medical or dental procedure. Your doctor will tell you when you should stop taking ELIQUIS and when you may start taking it again. If you have to stop taking ELIQUIS, your doctor may prescribe another medicine to help prevent a blood clot from forming.
- **ELIQUIS can cause bleeding which can be serious,** and rarely may lead to death.
- **You may have a higher risk of bleeding if you take ELIQUIS and** take other medicines that increase your risk of bleeding, such as aspirin, NSAIDs, warfarin (COUMADIN®), heparin, SSRIs or SNRIs, and other blood thinners. **Tell your doctor about all medicines, vitamins and supplements you take.** While taking ELIQUIS, you may bruise more easily and it may take longer than usual for any bleeding to stop.
- Get medical help right away if you have any of these signs or symptoms of bleeding:
  - unexpected bleeding, or bleeding that lasts a long time, such as unusual bleeding from the gums; nosebleeds that happen often, or menstrual or vaginal bleeding that is heavier than normal
  - bleeding that is severe or you cannot control
  - red, pink, or brown urine; red or black stools (looks like tar)
  - coughing up or vomiting blood or vomit that looks like coffee grounds
  - unexpected pain, swelling, or joint pain; headaches, feeling dizzy or weak
- **ELIQUIS is not for patients with artificial heart valves.**
- **Before you take ELIQUIS,** tell your doctor if you have: kidney or liver problems, any other medical condition, or ever had bleeding problems.

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or plan to become pregnant or breastfeed.

- **Do not take ELIQUIS if you** currently have certain types of abnormal bleeding or have had a serious allergic reaction to ELIQUIS. A reaction to ELIQUIS can cause hives, rash, itching, and possibly trouble breathing. Get medical help right away if you have sudden chest pain or chest tightness, have sudden swelling of your face or tongue, have trouble breathing, wheezing, or feeling dizzy or faint.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see additional Important Product Information on the adjacent page.

Individual results may vary.

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IMPORTANT FACTS

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What is the most important information I should know about ELIQUIS (apixaban)?

Do not stop taking ELIQUIS without talking to the doctor who prescribed it for you. Stopping ELIQUIS increases your risk of having a stroke. ELIQUIS may need to be stopped, prior to surgery or a medical or dental procedure. Your doctor will tell you when you should stop taking ELIQUIS and when you may start taking it again. If you have to stop taking ELIQUIS, your doctor may prescribe another medicine to help prevent a blood clot from forming.

ELIQUIS can cause bleeding which can be serious, and rarely may lead to death. This is because ELIQUIS is a blood thinner medicine that reduces blood clotting.

You may have a higher risk of bleeding if you take ELIQUIS and take other medicines that increase your risk of bleeding, such as aspirin, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (called NSAIDs), warfarin (COUMADIN®), heparin, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) or serotonin norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs), and other medicines to help prevent or treat blood clots.

Tell your doctor if you take any of these medicines. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure if your medicine is one listed above.

While taking ELIQUIS:

- you may bruise more easily
- it may take longer than usual for any bleeding to stop

Call your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of these signs or symptoms of bleeding when taking ELIQUIS:

- unexpected bleeding, or bleeding that lasts a long time, such as:
  - unusual bleeding from the gums
  - nosebleeds that happen often
  - menstrual bleeding or vaginal bleeding that is heavier than normal
- bleeding that is severe or you cannot control
- red, pink, or brown urine
- red or black stools (looks like tar)
- cough up blood or blood clots
- vomit blood or your vomit looks like coffee grounds
- unexpected pain, swelling, or joint pain
- headaches, feeling dizzy or weak

ELIQUIS (apixaban) is not for patients with artificial heart valves.

What is ELIQUIS?

ELIQUIS is a prescription medicine used to reduce the risk of stroke and blood clots in people who have atrial fibrillation.

It is not known if ELIQUIS is safe and effective in children.

Who should not take ELIQUIS?

Do not take ELIQUIS if you:

- currently have certain types of abnormal bleeding
- have had a serious allergic reaction to ELIQUIS. Ask your doctor if you are not sure

What should I tell my doctor before taking ELIQUIS?

Before you take ELIQUIS, tell your doctor if you:

- have kidney or liver problems
- have any other medical condition
- have ever had bleeding problems
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if ELIQUIS will harm your unborn baby
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if ELIQUIS passes into your breast milk. You and your doctor should decide if you will take ELIQUIS or breastfeed. You should not do both

Tell all of your doctors and dentists that you are taking ELIQUIS. They should talk to the doctor who prescribed ELIQUIS for you, before you have **any** surgery, medical or dental procedure.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Some of your other medicines may affect the way ELIQUIS works. Certain medicines may increase your risk of bleeding or stroke when taken with ELIQUIS.

How should I take ELIQUIS (apixaban)?

Take ELIQUIS exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Take ELIQUIS twice every day with or without food, and do not change your dose or stop taking it unless your doctor tells you to. If you miss a dose of ELIQUIS, take it as soon as you remember, and do not take more than one dose at the same time. **Do not run out of ELIQUIS. Refill your prescription before you run out. Stopping ELIQUIS may increase your risk of having a stroke.**

What are the possible side effects of ELIQUIS?

- See **"What is the most important information I should know about ELIQUIS?"**
- ELIQUIS can cause a skin rash or severe allergic reaction. Call your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following symptoms:
  - chest pain or tightness
  - swelling of your face or tongue
  - trouble breathing or wheezing
  - feeling dizzy or faint

Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all of the possible side effects of ELIQUIS. For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

This is a brief summary of the most important information about ELIQUIS. For more information, talk with your doctor or pharmacist, call 1-855-ELIQUIS (1-855-354-7847), or go to www.ELIQUIS.com.

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December 2012
432US13CBS03602

ALL ABOUT ALLERGIES

BY MARK L. FUERST

If you are one of the 40 million Americans with seasonal allergies, you know all too well that springtime means higher pollen counts. Seasonal allergies such as hay fever are the most common type of allergy, which is an overreaction of your immune system to a foreign substance ("allergen"). This can result in coughing, sneezing, itchy eyes, a runny nose, a scratchy throat and more. In severe cases of skin, food, latex, insect or eye allergies, it can lead to rashes, hives, lower blood pressure, difficulty breathing, asthma attacks and even death.

Knowing exactly what you are allergic to can help lessen or prevent exposure and treat reactions. Allergy skin testing, considered the most sensitive testing method, provides rapid results. The most common test involves pricking the skin with the extract of a specific allergen, then observing the skin's reaction. Blood tests can provide similar information.

Treatment The best treatment for allergies is to avoid the offending allergens. If you are allergic to a specific food like peanuts, remove them from your diet (be careful for the food to be hidden in other foods). That's not so easy when you are allergic to ragweed pollen in the air, but various over-the-counter or prescription medications can relieve the common symptoms.

Antihistamines These medications counter the effects of histamine, the substance that makes your eyes water, nose itch and causes you to sneeze. Newer antihistamines do not cause the sleepiness brought on by older versions.

Nasal steroids These anti-inflammatory sprays help decrease swelling and mucus production. They work alone or in combination with antihistamines, and are relatively free of side effects.

Cromolyn sodium This nasal spray also helps stop hay fever, perhaps by blocking the release of histamine and other symptom-producing chemicals. It has few side effects.

Decongestants Available in capsule and spray form, these drugs may reduce swelling and sinus discomfort. They are intended for short-term use, and are usually used along with antihistamines. Be aware that long-term use of decongestant sprays can make your symptoms worse.

Allergy shots Also known as immunotherapy, these might help if you don't get relief with antihistamines or nasal steroids. They alter the body's immune response and help prevent allergic reactions. They are the only form of treatment that induces long-lasting protection. But these treatments are limited because

See **ALLERGIES** *on page* **16**

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U.S. health, by the numbers

39 Percent of college graduates considered to be in "excellent health"

17 Percent of non-high-school graduates considered to be in "excellent health"

12 Percent of Americans limited in their usual activities due to one or more chronic health conditions

2 Percent of Americans requiring the help of another person with activities such as eating, dressing or bathing

6 Percent of adults 18 to 69 unable to work due to health problems

8 Percent of Americans who delayed seeking medical care in the past year due to cost

6 Percent of Americans who did not receive needed care due to cost

50 Percent of people 65 and older with private health insurance

35 Percent of people 65 and older with only Medicare

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their physicians when they have health problems.

UNDER FIRE

E-cigarettes are touted as a healthier alternative to tobacco, but doctors want more research.

BY LANCE FRAZER

Corbis

Electronic cigarettes – called e-cigarettes – are mechanical devices that convert liquid nicotine into vapor that can be inhaled. No tobacco burns in them, reducing the production of toxic and carcinogenic chemicals.

But comparatively little is known about the effects of what they do produce, and that concerns Bruce MacLeod, an emergency medicine physician and president of the Pennsylvania Medical Society. He believes that until more research has been done, these devices should be regulated like traditional cigarettes.

"These things take liquid nicotine (a highly addictive substance) and vaporize it for inhalation," MacLeod says. "We know that nicotine overdoses can accelerate cardiovascular and other problems, and ... we have no idea what the long-term effects are of these things."

A spokesperson for the Food and Drug Administration says the FDA intends to propose a regulation that would extend the agency's "tobacco product" authority – which currently applies only to cigarettes, cigarette tobacco, roll-your-own tobacco and smokeless tobacco – to other items that meet the statutory definition of "tobacco product."

Thomas Kiklas, co-founder of the Tobacco Vapor Electronic Cigarette Association trade group, says that e-cigarettes are misrepresented and misunderstood.

"We make no claims to stop smoking. We are a safer alternative to tobacco, and there are now 5 million people in this country using e-cigarettes with no reported harm."

Kiklas clarifies that his group has not conducted a study to that effect, but adds, "I'm sure there are a number of dual users out there. My evidence on this is anecdotal, based on commentary from tens of thousands of users."

Richard Hurt, director of the Mayo Clinic Nicotine Dependence Center, agrees that e-cigarettes do contain and produce far fewer harmful chemicals than tobacco cigarettes. Nevertheless, he'd prefer to see further study.

"Our studies indicate that, at least as they're presently designed, these things do not deliver nicotine to the lungs, but rather to the mouth, throat and upper airways. That being the case, I would want to see more study on the impact on those areas of the body of repeated exposure to high doses of nicotine.

"As a scientist," he continues, "I want to see sound, long-term evidence of two things. First, is it safe? Secondly, does it work? And does it work better than more well-studied alternatives (for nicotine delivery)?"

Lance Frazer is a writer specializing in health and medicine, nature, science and the environment.

ALLERGIES *continued from page* **15**

of potential allergic reactions, which can be severe.

Allergy myths and misconceptions Common myths and misconceptions about allergies persist due to false information in the media and online. Dr. David Stukus, an allergist at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, outlines some of the greatest myths.

"I'm allergic to artificial dyes." There is no scientific evidence supporting a link between exposure to artificial coloring and allergies.

"I cannot have vaccines due to an egg allergy." Egg embryos are used to grow viruses for vaccines such as the flu, yellow fever and rabies shots. But it's safe to get a flu shot, which can help prevent serious illness.

"At-home blood tests reveal all you are allergic to." These tests might reveal sensitivity to, for example, milk, but that doesn't mean you are necessarily allergic to it.

Media Bakery

"I'm allergic to cats and dogs but can have a hypoallergenic breed." There is no such thing as a truly hypoallergenic cat or dog. It's not the fur you may be allergic to but the allergens released in saliva and glands.

"I'm allergic to shellfish and cannot have iodine imaging." Some physicians have linked a reaction to iodine dye used in imaging tests to a shellfish allergy, but iodine cannot be an allergen since it is found in the human body.

"I can't have bread because I'm allergic to gluten." Many people claim to have a gluten allergy. You may have gluten intolerance, but it's extremely rare to have a true allergy to wheat-based foods.

If you think you may have an allergy, Stukus recommends that you see a board-certified allergist for proper evaluation, testing, diagnosis and treatment.

Mark L. Fuerst is a Brooklyn-based health and fitness writer.

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Congress retreats on COLA cap

BY TOM PHILPOTT

Six weeks after passing a law that would have lowered the value of military retirement for current and future working-age retirees, a besieged Congress voted overwhelmingly to repeal it.

Cost-of-living adjustments for retirees younger than 62 will now not be set a full percentage point below annual inflation starting in January 2016, as Congress voted in December as part of a bipartisan debt reduction deal.

Like the COLA cap itself, the language for repeal was decided behind closed doors by a few powerful lawmakers and approved in a hurry.

That's why most members of Congress would be hard-pressed to explain why the cap remains in effect for servicemembers who enter the military on or after Jan. 1 of this year and serve long enough to retire.

DoD

In a brief Capitol Hill press conference, House Speaker John Boehner called it a "fairer way" to save retirement dollars than by targeting those "already retired (and) already signed up for service."

Repeal brought relief to hundreds of thousands of current retirees younger than 62 as well as to servicemembers completing full careers and, for many, years of wartime service.

"In short," The American Legion told the Senate Armed Services Committee in February, "each retiree is expected to return an average of $600 per year of their retirement dollars to the treasury so that Congress can continue to wring their hands over sequestration – a provision they promised would never actually go into effect."

In reversing course, a fiercely divided Congress still needed its leaders to shape a solution for COLA cap repeal in privacy. Republicans and Democrats found it painful to compromise, in this case on a plan to replace more than $6 billion in military retirement savings over the next decade.

Senate Republicans wanted the savings replaced by ending federal tax credits that benefit children of illegal immigrants. Senate Democrats wanted to close a tax loophole that allows companies with overseas operations to avoid U.S. corporate taxes.

Recognizing that Republicans would never accept tax hikes, Democrats shifted to supporting a COLA cap repeal bill with no offsets to replace lost savings, a move Republicans said could unravel the December budget deal.

In the House, Republican leaders for a time wanted to attach repeal of the COLA cap to a bill to raise the debt ceiling. The intent was to give fiscal conservatives political cover to vote to raise the ceiling and avoid economic crisis, on a pretext that inaction would hurt military retirees.

When Tea Party Republicans signaled that they would still oppose raising the ceiling unless Democrats made painful concessions, Boehner scrapped that plan and sent a clean debt-ceiling bill to the floor.

Boehner then attached repeal language to S. 25, an obscure bill passed earlier to give a utility in southern Utah access to an electrical grid operated on nearby federal land. As revised, S. 25 would offset the lost savings from the COLA cap repeal by extending for a year, through 2024, across-the-board budget cuts called sequestration.

The House approved S. 25 on a vote of 326 to 90. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid initially criticized the bill for supporting COLA cap relief by extending sequestration. But with a snowstorm on its way and Congress set to adjourn, he changed his mind. S. 25 passed the Senate 95 to 3.

The only senator to speak in opposition was Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., a longtime critic of mounting federal debt. "How do we convey to the nation the seriousness (of) solving the debt crisis when at the first sign of political pressure we repeal one of the deficit-reduction measures?" he asked colleagues.

A majority of lawmakers, however, sided with current and future retirees, saying it was wrong and politically unwise to have singled out the military for cuts in promised retirement benefits.

Tom Philpott, a Coast Guard veteran, has written about military personnel and veterans issues for more than 30 years.

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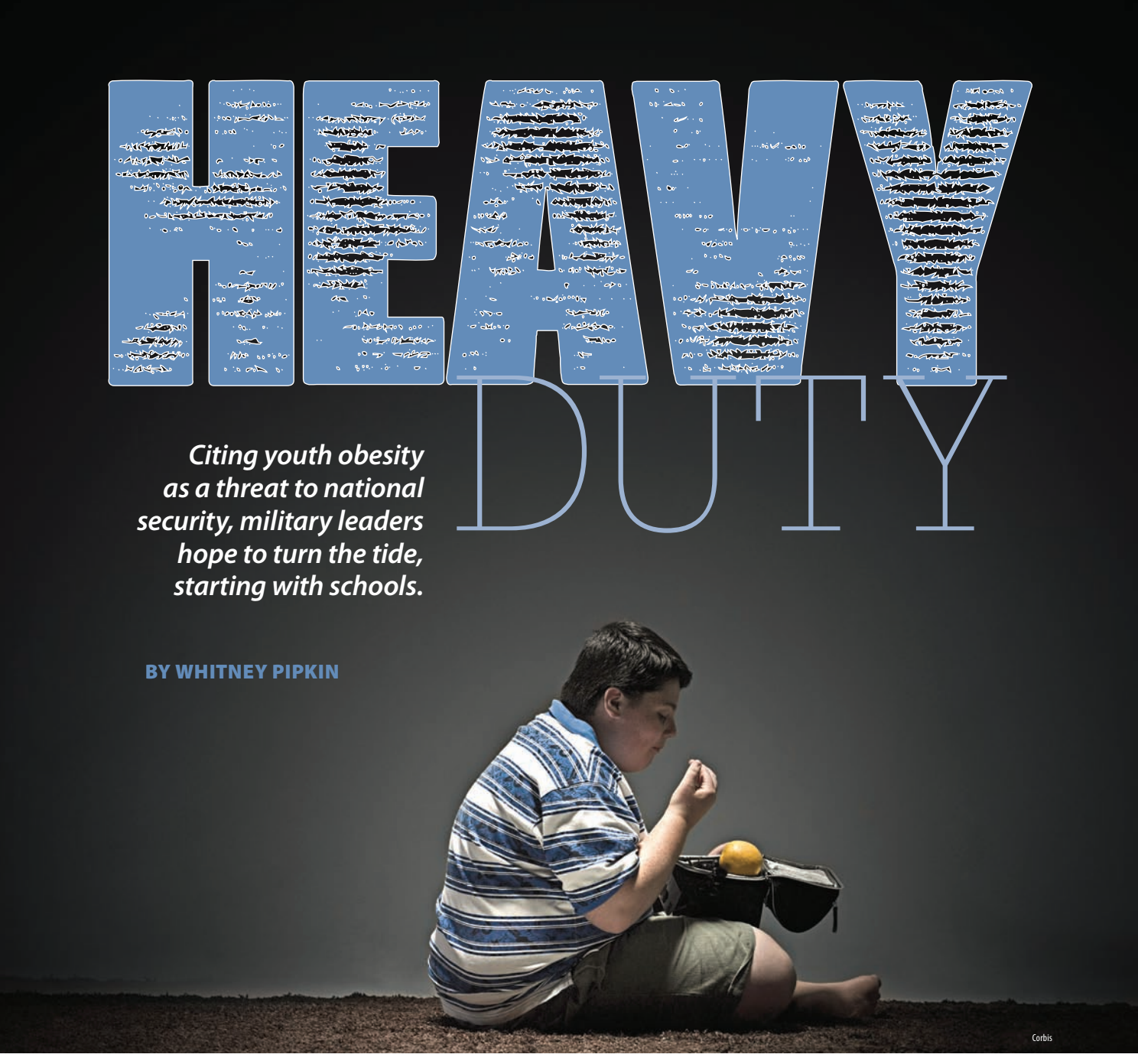
HEAVY DUTY

Citing youth obesity as a threat to national security, military leaders hope to turn the tide, starting with schools.

BY WHITNEY PIPKIN



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In 2006, three years before the Pentagon published a report diagnosing American obesity as a threat to national security, Lt. Gen. Mark Hertling was already seeing the symptoms. Stationed with troops in Europe at the time, he saw the fitness shortfalls plaguing troops firsthand as he equipped some 160,000 new soldiers at the helm of Initial Military Training. While these training groups represented the cream of the recruiting crop – the soldier hopefuls not disqualified for being overweight, undereducated or having criminal records, among other leading factors – they still bore the traits of an increasingly unhealthy culture.

Even those who met the Army's height and weight requirements and passed its fitness test showed signs of previously sedentary and nutrient-poor lifestyles. Bone density and muscle development issues led to a proliferation of injuries during training; tooth decay from sugar-rich diets added to health-care costs and downtime. They were not just unprepared for battle – many weren't healthy enough to endure training.

What Hertling, now retired, and other leaders saw anecdotally was soon supported by a series of official reports. And the evidence of a generation less able to meet the physical requirements of service is piling up.

Today, one of every four young adults of prime recruiting age is disqualified from service because of excess body fat. Weight-related medical issues are now the No. 1 factor keeping young people from serving, according to surveys conducted by the military and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

A cultural lack of nutrition and exercise also is evident among those who do meet the initial physical requirements to join the military. One study found that 14 percent of male Army recruits said they had not exercised or done any sports in a typical week prior to joining. Less-fit recruits are prone to the types of leg and ankle injuries that have sent more soldiers home from Iraq and Afghanistan than combat wounds.

The Army and other branches have begun cracking down on soldiers who don't make the physical-fitness cut, replacing the leniency that had accompanied a surge in soldier recruitment during two wars with a slimmer force. More than 1,600 troops were dismissed from the Army in the first 10 months of 2012 for being out of shape, compared to 116 in 2007.

But what about the next time the country needs to recruit a fit force – and quickly?

Projections show that the number of obese adults in most states will crest over 50 percent by 2030, according to an annual report by Trust for America's Health. The CDC and the military define "obese" as weighing above what is generally thought healthy for a given height. A body mass index (BMI) of 30 or higher is considered obese.

The increase in obesity among adults tracks with its steeply rising rate among today's youth, which has tripled over the past 40 years. The lack of fitness among U.S. children is a sobering symptom of its unhealthy culture and, according to one group, an indicator that the country may not be able to answer the call of duty in the future.

A TEAM SPORT An organization of more than 400 former U.S. military leaders is starting young, waging its battle against the bulge in schools.

Members of the Washington-based Mission: Readiness see the vending machines in school halls, bottomless French fries in cafeterias and the demise of physical education classes as a threat to national security. They see today's youth as tomorrow's recruits and can't ignore their alarming trajectory when it comes to physical health.

"The folks we're looking to enter the military in 2025 are entering school today," says Norman Seip, a retired Air Force general who has memorized many of the statistics since joining Mission: Readiness in 2009. "If you're overweight by 10 or 15 years of age, the statistics show that there's an 80 percent chance of obesity by 25."

Seip, who is in his 60s, joined Mission: Readiness because he wants each generation to have the opportunity to "do better" than the one before. He wants the military to have the best pool of candidates to choose from and imagines that as the economy improves the competition for recruits will become steep.

As a squadron commander, he has had to discharge airmen who couldn't meet the Air Force's weight standards, and says "it's one of the hardest things to do."

Along with passing physical fitness tests, members of the armed forces have to meet height and weight requirements or body fat standards. A 2008 Department of Defense study found that nearly 5,000 servicemembers were discharged for failing to meet those standards, costing the department an estimated $180 million to train and recruit additional forces that year.

No wonder the obesity epidemic, which the American Medical Association officially declared a disease last year – one affecting more than a third of U.S. adults – worries military leaders.

America's weight gain has been linked to everything from socioeconomic status and cheap food to sedentary day jobs and family history. Experts agree that fast food and an aversion to exercise have helped increase waistlines and that better habits are key to reversing the trend. But there's little they can do to instill sweeping cultural changes in a country where what we eat is a very personal decision.

While the military has made changes to its dietary offerings on bases, and others are working to do the same in schools, the rest is largely up to individuals.

"It will be a team sport," says Seip, noting that the work of Mission: Readiness is one small component. "There's a place for government, parents, kids, schools, the medical community, and (the) food and beverage industry. They have to decide what's in the best interest for that generation of kids who need healthy choices."

'SILVER BUCKSHOT' For a problem rooted in culture that appears to get worse with each generation, Seip and his colleagues are determined to address it at the source.

Dennis Benchoff, a retired Army general and former chief of staff at Army Recruiting Command,

quotes the old proverb, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." The preventive health measures he is working on as a member of Mission: Readiness are multipronged.

Children consume up to half their daily calories while at school, leading nutrition experts and the Institute of Medicine to declare schools a focal point of efforts to combat childhood obesity.

The nonpartisan group released its first "Too Fat to Fight" report in 2010, showing the small pool of eligible military recruits on a path to even slimmer margins as childhood obesity rates balloon.

That same year, its fleet of retired generals and admirals expressed support for the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act championed by first lady Michelle Obama. The legislation passed and, as a result, the vast majority of schools in the country have updated their nutrition standards for school meals, helping to reduce the caloric and sugar intake of many students.

Benchoff said the group isn't trying to turn schools into military recruitment camps. It is trying to ensure children have the opportunity to serve if they so choose.

MORE THAN FINE

Officer's efforts to help an airman lose weight led him to get – and stay – in shape.

Jay Stratton didn't lose weight to join the military. He did it to help someone else stay in.

A major in the Air Force Reserves, Stratton was supervising commander for a reserve squadron when the Air Force added a new rule to slim its force: a maximum waist measurement.

Stratton, 42, said he barely came in below the new 39-inch limit (measured around the belly button) at the time. Meanwhile, an airman in his squadron was "nowhere near being fine" and needed help to lose the weight.

"I said, 'Look, I'm going to help you lose weight so you can stay in,'" Stratton says. "He had 15 years of service, and if he didn't pass they'd boot him out."

After a decade of commuting in and out of the Washington area for his day job, Stratton had put on a few pounds, too. He'd been reading books about nutrition and fitness since the late 1990s but hadn't applied what he'd learned.

He did now.

"I started educating him on how he should eat and exercise – everything I knew. I said, 'I'll live this with you, lead by example,'" Stratton remembers.

So he did. In October 2009, Stratton began religiously applying his mantra about fitness – eating the right foods, and exercising with focus and intensity.

He started writing down what he had learned over the years to share with others in the military. He saw the airman he was trying to help only two days each month, so it was difficult to keep him motivated.

Over the course of six months, Stratton's body changed dramatically. He dropped 10 inches from his waist and shed 85 pounds, ending up at 155 pounds (and adding some muscle so he'd avoid being underweight for his height).

Maj. Jay Stratton shoulder throws a Marine during martial arts training at Camp Leatherneck in Afghanistan's Helmand province. In 2009, the Air Force added a maximum waist requirement, motivating the officer to take personal fitness seriously. DVIDS

Stratton had seen firsthand the changes that could happen if he put his mind to it, even with a long commute and family dinners with a wife and two children at home. Unfortunately, the airman he had been trying to encourage was not as successful.

"I could tell him everything, and he would say 'OK, OK.' Then, at the end of the day, every month I was having a radical change and he wasn't changing at all," Stratton says.

Stratton continued to work with him in attempts to get the weight off, but it didn't happen. After two years of trying, the airman was released from the Air Force Reserve for failing to meet the physical requirements.

For Stratton, fitness had taken on new importance. He kept the weight off through another deployment to Afghanistan – his eighth. Staying fit has been harder since he returned to the desk job, but he's committed.

Stratton is now working on a book he hopes will help other military members stay in shape.

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"Even if a young child doesn't want to serve, being fit, mentally alert and staying out of trouble gives them a wealth of opportunities they wouldn't have," he says. "We want to improve the overall condition of young Americans so that, if they're interested, they can serve."

Mission: Readiness wants to see schools have access to healthful foods and cafeteria workers have the training and equipment to prepare them.

Last summer, the group took on another foe of healthy eating in America's schools: snacks. The group is still pressing for the USDA to update standards for snack foods and beverages sold in school vending machines, stores and a la carte lines. Members said it didn't make sense to tighten health measures on school lunches without addressing the junk food many kids buy while on school grounds.

To get the message across, the group of military leaders uses illustrations that are in their wheelhouse, continuing to tie the issues back to national security. For example, they say the amount of junk food kids consume in schools each year – the equivalent of 2 billion candy bars – would weigh more than the aircraft carrier USS *Midway*.

"When you see retired generals and admirals talk about kids in a lunchroom, we're able to frame it as America's problem, as a national security issue," Seip says. "We don't have a silver bullet. This is silver buckshot, I like to say, aimed in the right direction."

The group of leaders is also aiming to encourage physical education in schools and among youths as part of a holistic approach.

Benchoff first noticed the effect of America's lack of fitness on national security in 1980, when he was assigned to Army Recruiting Command. The Army had fallen 17,000 soldiers short of recruiting goals the previous year – the equivalent of an armored division – following the end of the draft.

Benchoff was charged with researching how to prevent future shortfalls. He learned that half the high school graduates the Army was targeting were not qualified to serve due to medical, physical, mental or moral reasons. The primary factor, even then, was recruits being overweight or dealing with hypertension. Many couldn't pass the physical fitness exams.

After Benchoff retired and was approached by Mission: Readiness, he found that the number of recruits now disqualified from service for those same factors is 75 percent. He didn't have to imagine the problem the military would have if a larger force is suddenly needed.

HISTORY This is not the first time the United States has squared off against fitness and nutrition issues, declaring obesity a threat to national security. Nor is it the first time the solution has targeted young people, says Dr. Chip East, director of guidance at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y., and author of a historical review of physical readiness training in the Army.

President Dwight Eisenhower launched the Presidential Council on Youth Fitness in 1948 with military readiness in mind (the council has had several names since then and became the President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition in 2010). A study in the late 1940s revealed European children to be far more fit than U.S. youth, more than half of whom failed a basic test of leg lifts, situps and toe touches. An Army general during World War II, Eisenhower was keenly aware that half the men who showed up for the draft had been deemed physically unfit (though the problem was more muscular deficiency than obesity at the time, hence the need for Captain America-type transformations).

A handful of initiatives to address troop fitness ramped up during the war, including a Victory Corps program that encouraged high school students to take on physical fitness regiments and other vocational training related to the war effort.

Concerned that poor nutrition was leaving troops and future recruits unprepared, President Harry Truman signed the National School Lunch Act in 1946 to provide additional funding for states to serve school meals that met federal nutrition standards.

"It is hereby declared to be the policy of Congress, as a measure of national security, to safeguard the health and well-being of the nation's children and to encourage the domestic consumption of nutritious agricultural commodities and other food," the legislation stated.

While our idea of what constitutes "nutritious agricultural commodities" may have changed since then, the basics of the obesity conundrum are this: Americans need to eat less and move more. But if personal health isn't enough to inspire life changes, will obesity's threat to national security do the trick?

"This happened fairly quickly," Seip says. "It will probably take longer to reduce the trend. But we think it's doable."

Whitney Pipkin is a freelance writer and editor in Alexandria, Va., whose work focuses on food. She is a Navy spouse and fitness instructor.

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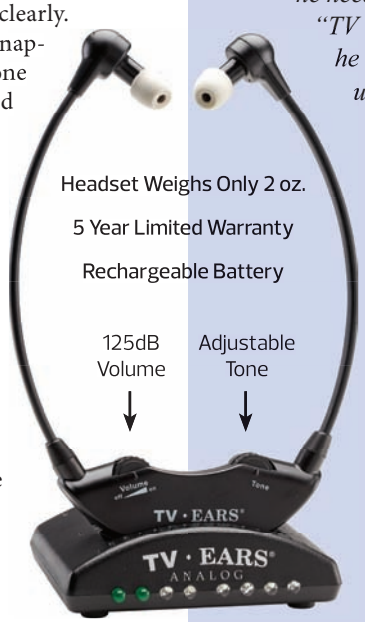

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LA Transformational

Newly rebuilt Patriotic Hall stands as a towering symbol of change in Los Angeles.

BY JEFF STOFFER

Jay Morales nearly missed the moment he spent more than three decades trying to reach. Something that followed him home from the Vietnam War stood in the way. The longtime member of American Legion Post 8 was determined, however, not to let an adverse reaction to medication he uses to control the effects of Agent Orange exposure keep him away from 1816 South Figueroa Street. Not on this day.

This was the morning of Nov. 8, 2013, the day Los Angeles County would ceremoniously rededicate Bob Hope Patriotic Hall as a veterans memorial building after a seven-year, $46 million renovation. A 10-story cathedral of military service, it was once the tallest building in Los Angeles. The neo-Italian Renaissance-style structure has dwelled in Morales' mind since his father first took him there when he was a young boy. The property has been a beacon for Southern California veterans since 1886, when the Grand Army of the Republic obtained a corner of a beanfield to erect a three-story house for Civil War veterans to gather. The house was outgrown, torn down and replaced after the Spanish-American War, in 1907. Following World War I, as The American Legion rose to prominence in the city, an even bigger center for veterans was needed, and 10 lots of the former beanfield were deeded to the county at $1 each on the promise that the property would be used only for veterans and their interests – thus the label "veterans memorial building," a protection that would come in handy decades later. The massive new hall would be designed and built "for the purpose of perpetuating patriotic ideals," Los Angeles County Supervisor J.H. "Jack" Bean said at the groundbreaking ceremony in 1924.

Jay Morales, left, and Hugh Crooks Jr. have fought for more than three decades to keep Patriotic Hall true to its original intent.
Allen J. Schaben / *Los Angeles Times*

Patriotic ideals have faced many challenges during the past 90 years in Los Angeles. Morales, a Marine Corps intelligence photographer who once flew with Bob Hope over the jungles of Vietnam to perform at a USO show, has confronted them all, guided by a love of country and a commitment to LA veterans past, present and future. To him, Patriotic Hall symbolizes a lineage that cannot be broken, war era to war era, one generation to the next. After all the years he fought to keep the facility true to its original intent, nothing was going to stop him from attending the rededication. He arrived shortly before the invocation, his reaction having subsided.

"Those old men that I had the privilege and honor of learning from were pugnacious as all get out, the guys who fought to build this building," says Morales, seated inside the General Omar Bradley Room on the hall's sixth floor. "Their spirit and their attitude and their willingness to fight for it inspired the Vietnam vet generation. Because of them, we, the Vietnam vets, have been able to pass it on to the next generation of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans."

The hall is more than a shrine to patriotic ideals. It is characterized by local officials as a purpose-driven "one-stop shop" for the county's Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, where help with benefits, health care, jobs, housing and other needs can be obtained. The hall is also home to the offices of Post 8 and other veterans service organizations. There are banquet rooms, meeting halls and a library. The top floor is a big gymnasium originally designed for disabled World War I veterans who played wheelchair basketball there.

Patriotic Hall is also filled with original art, artifacts, flags, historical uniforms, photographs and books – much of which were collected by, or belong to, Post 8. The hall has been the location of nearly 300 movie scenes for films including "Vertigo," "Patton," "Flashdance," and "1941." The structure is also believed to contain ghosts – the pensive Civil War colonel who can be heard stomping across the gym floor at night, the rocking chair that rocks when no one appears to be there, a woman dressed in red who glides above the hardwood floors.

World leaders, from France's Ferdinand Foch to China's Chiang Kai-shek to America's Ronald Reagan, have come to Patriotic Hall and left behind signed photos and thank-you notes to Legionnaires. Uniforms worn by Winston Churchill, Gen. George S. Patton and Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf can be found in the hall, which was ground zero in what became known as the Great LA Air Raid of 1942 – the true story of World War I veterans firing from the rooftop at what they wrongly believed was an enemy plane.

As a veterans memorial building, on ground used for no other purpose for nearly 130 years, Patriotic Hall is held together as much by lore as by bricks and mortar.

In the early 1980s, it was scheduled to be torn down and replaced with a parking structure.

That's when Morales and his fellow Legionnaires began a long and complicated journey that led them to Nov. 8.

To understand the state of patriotism in Los Angeles, one need only spend a couple of days bouncing across the city with Morales or American Legion Past Department Commander Hugh Crooks Jr., also a member of Post 8. They seem to know everyone who has ever said the Pledge of Allegiance in the nation's second largest city.

At one such location, Palisades Post 283 along the affluent shoulders of Sunset Boulevard, Adjutant Scott Erickson acknowledges a shift in perception today about returning veterans, and patriotism in general, in Los Angeles. "There is an awakening – a resurgence," Erickson says, remembering back to the tepid welcome he and many of his fellow Vietnam War veterans received when they came home. "There's a spark, but like any little thing, you've got to nurture it."

Because there's only so much time in a day, the Morales-Crooks tour of patriotic Los Angeles can't hit everything, but on the Thursday before Veterans Day, it certainly includes Rio Hondo School in El Monte, where once a year students take a break from classroom studies for a day dedicated solely to honoring veterans. The tour also includes a stop at Manual Arts High School in South Central LA, where an American Legion-supported and award-winning Junior ROTC program is changing the lives of young people every day. Historic Hollywood Post 43 is on the map as preparations are made, heading into the big weekend, to host a nationally televised telethon to help veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain

ONLINE EXTRAS

Read an extended version of "LA Transformational," including the stories of the Great LA Air Raid of 1942 and Manual Arts JROTC, along with videos, photos, links and more.

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injury. The journey includes dinner at the Golden Dragon Restaurant, home of Post 628 in Chinatown, which was chartered in 1945 after 16 Chinese-American veterans came home from World War II. The tour includes USS *Iowa*, a floating museum at the Port of Los Angeles in San Pedro, and the Shakespeare Center of LA, where founder and artistic director Ben Donnenberg credits The American Legion for building a bridge with VA that has made the center's Veterans in Art program an unexpectedly big success heading into its third season.

"Without Post 8, we would not have had access because (VA) would have been circumspect," Donnenberg says. "Post 8 assured them that this was a safe thing to do. The program has been transformational."

"I started out as a homeless person," says Jerry Whiteside, a Marine Corps veteran soon to start his third summer working on the Shakespeare productions. "Now I am a student, working in theater, working my way to head usher… I've got my own place, and my friends – real friends – have grown from one to about six, and five of those are in theater."

To Donnenberg, the veterans he employs, and most of those woven into the patriotic tapestry of Los Angeles today, the prevailing theme is transformation – sociological and psychological. "I remember that first performance, when the audience got up and gave a standing ovation," explains David Ramos, also a formerly homeless Marine Corps veteran who now works for Shakespeare LA. "It brought a lot of us to tears. It was amazing. I know this has changed me. There are people out there who really care about us veterans."

"I see a revival of appreciation for our veterans, citywide, countywide," says Scott Wagenseller, commander of Post 283 and a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. "I see a real resurgence of community support, appreciation and understanding of the sacrifices veterans have made."

Chris Lozano, a Santa Monica College student and two-deployment Iraq war Army veteran, joined Post 283 when he needed help finding part-time work. He went to his campus veterans office, which referred him to The American Legion. Post 283 hired Lozano as a part-time server, and he soon became a member, part of a growing fold of young veterans who have joined. "Veterans are really close to each other," Lozano says. "I really like that camaraderie. They seem to be the only ones who understand me."

A student at Rio Hondo School studies a display honoring veterans, including members of the U.S. Armed Forces who made the ultimate sacrifice in the war on terrorism. Photo by Jeff Stoffer

Understanding of veterans and the military experience can be found in more corners of LA today than perhaps anytime since the end of World War II. "It means a lot because so many have served our country and don't get a word of thanks," says Tais Manzano, eighth-grade student body president at Rio Hondo School, who spent many lunch hours last fall preparing the program to honor veterans. "It means a lot to have these veterans here, to have them share their experiences with us."

John Aldrete, an Army Reserve veteran, brought his newly discharged 22-year-old son, Matthew, to Rio Hondo School for the program. "I wanted to bring him here to fit back in. I wanted him to feel recognized. This is part of coming home. He's doing fine."

A former student at Rio Hondo, Matthew does not remember such patriotic fervor at the school when he passed through it, back at the beginning of a war he would grow up to help fight. "I didn't see this so much when I came here," he said, just three weeks removed from his Army discharge, surrounded by children, teachers and veterans of all eras. "I'm happy it's happening."

Morales remembers his first encounter with Patriotic Hall. His father, a World War II veteran, was taking classes at nearby Los Angeles Trade Technical College, learning construction and electrical skills. "One day he said, 'Get in the truck – we're going down to the hall.' I'm about 11 years old. We park in the back parking lot. We come in the building. He had to see the service officer. I'm walking up the steps, thinking it looked like a church or a synagogue. I walk in the lobby and see all these murals on the wall. For a kid,

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it's overwhelming. You think you're in a cathedral or some sacred place. And you see all these battle flags. They had flags of all the units that served in World War II on the columns. And they had these huge chairs, beautiful chairs. Then he says to me, 'This is where the veterans meet. This is our veterans hall. If you're ever good enough to serve your country, and defend it, you can come here.' I never forgot that."

When Morales came home from the Vietnam War, he went to the hall for GI Bill counseling and to apply for his first VA home loan. He began to understand what Patriotic Hall meant, beyond the flags and chairs. He was able to go there because he had been good enough to serve his country. It was his because he was a veteran.

After college, Morales went to work as a bank manager not far from the hall. One day at work, he was told that some men were waiting to see him. "So I go out to shake their hands. 'What can I do for you gentlemen?'"

Three stern World War I veterans looked back at the young banker.

"We want to open an account, but before we give you any money, we want to know if you are a veteran," one of them explained. Morales convinced them that he was indeed a veteran. "Well, we are Post No. 8 of The American Legion, and we're here to open an account, but we only do business with veterans and companies and banks that hire veterans. If you don't hire veterans in this bank, we don't do business with you."

After much discussion, Morales passed muster. The men deposited $100,000 for the post. "That's how I became a member of Post 8 in 1974," Morales explains.

Within a year of joining, he was elected vice commander, in charge of membership, and began signing up his fellow Vietnam War veterans. By the late 1970s, he was adjutant of the post, deeply immersed in its history, traditions and collections. As the World War I veterans who recruited him into the Legion began to pass away, Morales understood who was now responsible to keep the Patriotic Hall lineage unbroken.

About that time, a development plan was unveiled that would expand the city convention center, give birth to the area known as LA Live, build the Staples Center and install new shops, hotels and restaurants just west of the downtown core. On the plan's map, the words PARKING STRUCTURE appeared at 1816 South Figueroa. Morales was aghast. "I said, 'Wait a minute … Patriotic Hall is there,'" he recalls.

Manual Arts High School Junior ROTC Chief Warrant Officer Vernon Dayton says his cadets know what it takes to bring home the 76-inch American Legion Cup. They have done it six straight times. Photo by Jeff Stoffer

"They said, 'Yes, Jay, but we're going to put a parking structure there.'"

The day after he spoke at the Bob Hope Patriotic Hall rededication ceremony last November, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti addressed hundreds of veterans from multiple war eras and service branches, along with their families, at the 2nd Annual Veterans Appreciation Festival alongside USS *Iowa*, on the LA Waterfront.

The famous battleship – known as the transatlantic taxi for President Franklin D. Roosevelt during World War II and for an 11-battle-star combat career that included heavy fighting during the Korean War and major modernizations during the Cold War – is more than a relic of naval history for Los Angeles, the mayor said. "When (*Iowa*) would roll into a port, it said America," explained Garcetti, a lieutenant in the Navy Reserve. "It spoke about our strength. It spoke about our values. This was a ship that was put into retirement a couple of times and brought out of retirement because it was so great and so grand. Now this is its final resting place, and I can't think of a better place for it."

Patriotic Hall, Garcetti said, has similar meaning for a city more commonly associated with Hollywood depictions and opinions of military service. "Edifices like Patriotic Hall were built to thank the sailors, the soldiers, the airmen and airwomen of their time," he said. "The rededication of the building, to me, means that whether you're coming home next week or you're coming home

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At the Patriotic Hall rededication ceremony the day before he spoke at *Iowa*, the mayor addressed a crowd of nearly 500 that had gathered in the same auditorium where George C. Scott gave his famous opening monologue in the 1970 movie "Patton." Garcetti told the crowd that the hall is an illustration of the selfless nature of military service. "We are reminded that we serve everyone, no matter their agenda, their race, their religion, creed or age. We come together to cross those lines – independent, Democrat, Republican – and realize that we are American first. Regardless where we come from, today we are one team again, one nation united in this great Patriotic Hall."

Patriotic Hall was considered old and expendable in the late 1970s. Its infrastructure problems – outdated wiring, plumbing, handicap-accessibility problems and elevator issues – would cost millions to modernize. "There were homeless veterans sleeping here," Morales says. "There were all kinds of issues and problems. It was really bad." He says the crime rate was high, and prostitution was rampant.

As a banker, Morales also faced the potential for a bitter irony. He might have been asked, as a participating lender, to loan money so developers could tear down Patriotic Hall and build the parking structure. The American Legion and other county veterans services were already planning to move out as plans moved along. The art and artifacts of the hall were going to be moved and displayed at the Museum of Natural History.

Morales and his fellow Legionnaires began digging into the law and found a solution. It all boiled down to Patriotic Hall's rare distinction as a "veterans memorial building" on land that was dedicated for one purpose and was essentially donated to the county on that basis.

One catch to that provision, the Legionnaires discovered, was that if the veterans ever vacated the building, no matter how long or why, "it's called abandonment,"

Hollywood history

Documentary film aims to deliver a unique glimpse into LA's most star-studded Legion post.

Matthew Conlan had no idea what The American Legion did or how it has supported veterans for decades. Nor did he appreciate the organization's historic accomplishments. Now he does. And he wants to share that story with the rest of the world.

A member of Hollywood Post 43 in Los Angeles, Conlan is working with others to create a film that documents not only the post's unique place in U.S. history but that of the entire American Legion.

Chartered in 1919, Post 43 was the post of veteran movie stars. Clark Gable, Ronald Reagan and Humphrey Bogart were members. Edward G. Robinson, James Cagney, Mae West, Frank Sinatra and others attended boxing matches at the post-owned Legion Fight Stadium. Rita Hayworth, Marilyn Monroe and Lana Turner frequented it.

The building itself is a veritable museum of Legion and Hollywood alike. Films and commercials have been made there, notably Stanley Kubrick's "The Shining" and J.J. Abrams' reboot of "Star Trek." All of that fascinated Conlan, a U.S. Coast Guard veteran who got to know the Legion when he was dealing with hard-to-shake memories of pulling dead bodies from the water while performing search-and-rescue missions. The duty took a toll on him.

"After I got out of the Coast Guard (in 1996), my wife was always telling me that I needed to talk to someone," Conlan said. "Eventually I went to Post 43. I had no idea what the Legion did or had done at that point. When people told me, 'Hey, you should go join a post,' I was like 'What's a post?'"

Conlan was immediately drawn to Post 43. "As soon as I stepped inside, I felt like the building was just talking to me." He began researching and interviewing post members on video. He found historical footage. He began to put it all together. Conlan hopes the film – now in production – can help share the Legion's story with a generation of Afghanistan and Iraq veterans now transitioning to civilian life, especially with the Legion's 100th anniversary coming.

A clip from the documentary was shown to a national Military Channel TV audience during the Homeward Bound PTSD-TBI telethon that the post hosted last fall. The clip has also been shown to some big Hollywood names, thanks to Conlan's very personal connections; his wife, Tracy Reiner, is an actress and the daughter of Penny Marshall and stepdaughter of Rob Reiner, as well as the niece of director/producer Garry Marshall. Tracy is a producer on the documentary, and Penny became executive producer after she viewed Conlan's work in progress. "Penny also feels that this is a story that needs to be told," Conlan said. "She loved it."

The documentary is to be completed this fall. **Watch the clip on YouTube. Search "Hollywood Post 43."**

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Morales says. “And once you’ve abandoned, they don’t have to take you back.”

To make clear that Post 8 had no plans to abandon Patriotic Hall, the Legionnaires established in court the right to sue the county over its planned use of the land if that use defied the original covenant. To make that case, Morales not only gathered the necessary legal research, he brought to the courthouse one of the last living World War I veterans of Post 8. “They asked him if he wanted to vacate,” Morales recalls. “He said, ‘Sir, I do not wish to vacate Patriotic Hall, and if other veterans of World War I were here today, they would say the same thing. We don’t want to leave. End of story.’”

The parking structure plan was dismissed.

When Patriotic Hall closed in 2006 so the major renovation project could begin, Morales, Crooks and their fellow veterans made sure everyone understood that Post 8 had no intention to vacate. They kept an eye on the U.S. flag and made sure it continued to fly high over the hall while work proceeded. Morales would occasionally bring fried chicken to the workers and, if they were eligible, sign them up for Legion membership.

In 2012, as completion drew near, Post 8 and other Patriotic Hall VSOs were advised that their new offices would be consolidated in the basement of the building. Morales and Crooks fought back and, like the plan to turn the hall into a parking structure 30 years earlier, the idea of moving the Legion and other VSOs into basement cubicles flickered out.

“When you say Patriotic Hall, you are basically saying this is a building for veterans, by and for and about veterans,” says Crooks, an infantryman in Vietnam from 1967 to 1969. “That’s what this building is for. All of your veterans service organizations are normally housed here. If not, you will find a representative for each and every one. This is where you go. You can come here and get anything and everything you need if you’re a veteran. Any kind of help you need, someone in this building will be able to help you or direct you, from filing a claim to finding some place to eat. This is a veterans memorial building, and it will stay a veterans memorial building as long as any veteran in Los Angeles County draws a breath.”

The Nov. 8, 2013, rededication ceremony was more about continuing a purpose than closing a controversy. Among the veterans attending that morning was 103-year-old Bea Cohen, who served in the Women’s Army Corps during World War II.

Bea Cohen, a 103-year-old World War II veteran, shares a moment with John L. Stamatiades of American Legion Post 285.
Photo by Jeff Stoffer

“I’ve been coming to Patriotic Hall for over 50 years,” she said from her seat in the front row of the auditorium. “America is the greatest country in the world.”

Legionnaires filled the hall as speakers stepped to the podium to salute the resurrection of Patriotic Hall. Cohen received a standing ovation. Crooks was invited onstage to help unveil a plaque commemorating the moment – a milestone not only for the building but for Los Angeles itself, the perpetuation of patriotic ideals as promised nearly 90 years ago.

“It’s now back to what it was intended to be,” says John L. Stamatiades of American Legion Post 285 in Los Angeles.

Patriotic Hall Director Ruth Wong, a member of Post 8, confirmed that interpretation of the hall’s place in the patriotic landscape of Los Angeles during her remarks at the ceremony. “Some visit us early after they leave military service. Others wait for years. We have World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Gulf War, Iraq and Afghanistan – post-9/11 vets – all seeking services. That’s why we have this veterans memorial building. We are here to help transition new veterans and advocate for them so that they can seek the benefits they are entitled to receive by virtue of their military service. As we approach them, let us take time to reflect on the sacrifices of more than 21 million veterans who have served our country. We are honored to serve and proud of belonging to a special family that we call veterans. Welcome home, to Patriotic Hall.”

Jeff Stoffer is editor of The American Legion Magazine.

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MAYOR OF LOS ANGELES:

'It's more than what we say'

Photo by Jeff Stoffer

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy Reserve, peered up the ramp of USS *Iowa*, caught the gaze of a veteran volunteer on deck, rendered a sharp salute and dutifully made his request: "Permission to come aboard, sir."

"Permission granted."

It was the second weekend of November, and the Port of Los Angeles waterfront was teeming with veterans, active-duty personnel, students, teachers, politicians, families and tourists. They came for the 2nd Annual Veterans Appreciation Festival at the San Pedro home of the great battleship, now a fully restored, floating museum that looks like it could steam off to war any time, as it first did in 1942.

In the morning sunshine, the mayor stood in the shadows of *Iowa*'s big guns and discussed with *The American Legion Magazine* a shifting perception – if not culture – about American patriotism in a city best known for making TV shows and movies.

What is changing about veteran appreciation in LA?
Even though there is such a small percentage of Americans in uniform now – an all-volunteer force – I think more and more people now know somebody from their family, or from their neighborhood, who has served over the last decade. This has been one of the longest periods of time in our nation's history when we have been at war. So it's personal now – making sure they don't come back to just a smile and a hug but to the services they need, whether they continue with a military career and need assistance to keep going, or whether they are transitioning to civilian life. It's more than what we say. It's what we do. Housing. Education. Jobs. Making sure that those who put on the nation's uniform continue to get the recognition and support that they need.

What does such recognition mean to you, as a veteran?
I recognize that few of my generation would ever wear the uniform. It was important for me to serve. Even though many of us in the Guard and reserve have full lives and full careers, I couldn't not do it. It's something I would regret the rest of my life – especially after 9/11. When I see the sacrifices that are made by my fellow shipmates – and I served recently in a unit that includes all the branches of the military – we are one team and one country. I think it's a great reminder to our national leaders that we are Americans before any other label that is put on us.

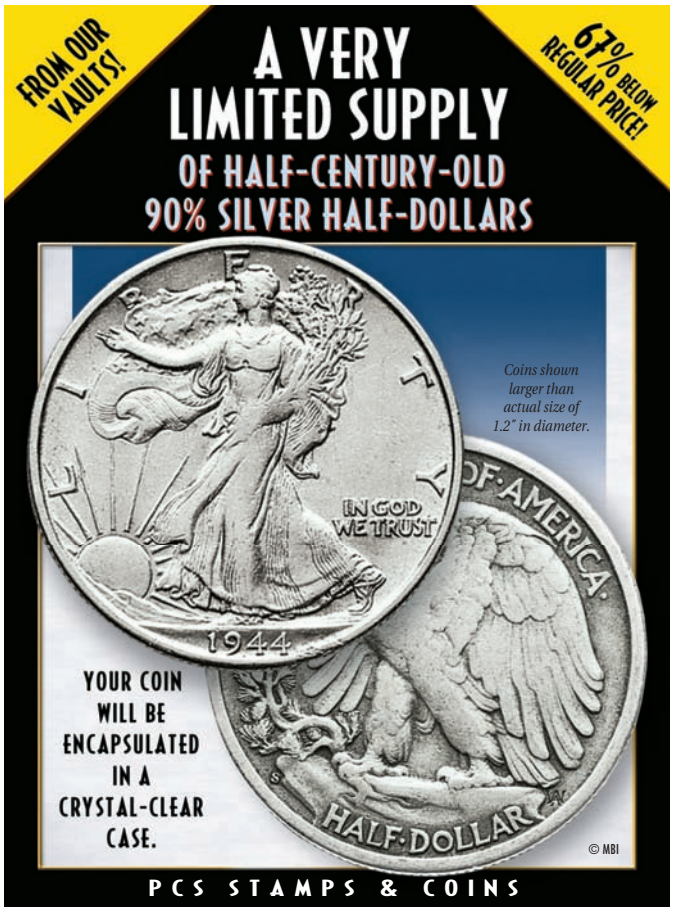
What do you think has changed in LA since Vietnam?
I think we definitely exorcised whatever demons were there from the Vietnam War. It's wonderful to see Vietnam vets here, to say "thank you" to them, because they felt like the country rejected them when they came home. This next generation grew up in a very different time, when we were attacked on our homeland. In Los Angeles, it's unique, because people come here from more than 150 countries. They chose this country. They love this country. Those of us who are American by birth sometimes can get a reminder, through their eyes, of just how important the liberties we have are.

You recently announced plans to reopen a City of Los Angeles military and veterans affairs office. Why?
I think that for a long time we just assumed other people would pick up the slack with our veterans, that the federal government was taking care of it through VA. But local governments touch people most immediately. We know everybody in our neighborhoods. We see them in our libraries and our parks. So it was important for me to re-establish that link, especially since Los Angeles has more veterans returning than anywhere in the country. We've given more in these recent wars, in terms of casualties, than any other city in America. The county has great programs. The state has good programs. And the federal government does. But I think it's that local city government that can most directly touch people's lives and connect them with the help they need. That's why I re-established it.

How do you see The American Legion fitting into your plans?
We hope that The American Legion and all (veterans service organizations), together with community groups, will use the City of Los Angeles as a place where they can come to convene people, use city facilities for meetings or veterans fairs, to let people (receive) services. We touch everybody's lives, but we can't do without the VSOs. The American Legion has incredible programs to make sure that those veterans who are out there today aren't left in isolation.

– Jeff Stoffer

See a video interview with Mayor Eric Garcetti online:
www.legion.org/losangeles



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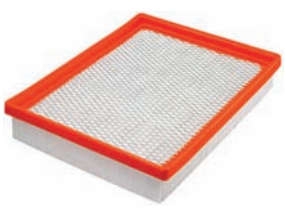
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on the EDGE

Doctors are prescribing too many opioid painkillers to young veterans, leading to addictions and accidental overdoses.

BY KEN OLSEN

By the time Justin Minyard discovered the video of himself stoned, drooling and unable to help his daughter unwrap her Christmas presents, he was taking enough OxyContin, oxycodone and Valium every day to deaden the pain of several terminally ill cancer patients.

"Heroin addicts call it the nod," the former Special Forces soldier says of his demeanor in that video. "My head went back. My eyes rolled back in my head. I started drooling on myself. My daughter was asking why I wasn't helping her, why I wasn't listening to her."

Seeing that video jolted Minyard out of a two-year opiate stupor. He asked a Fort Bragg pain specialist to help him get off the painkillers his primary care physician had prescribed. "I was extremely disappointed in myself," he says. "I knew I couldn't do that to my family again."

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[1] 98% based on member data from 2008–2012.

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There are thousands of post-9/11 veterans like Minyard – men and women whose bodies were broken by roadside bombs, bullets or jumping out of helicopters and Humvees day after day, deployment after deployment, wearing 80 pounds of body armor and battle gear. Some have traumatic brain injuries. Some have PTSD. Some have deteriorating knees, shoulders or spines. All have pain.

Overwhelmed primary care physicians have responded with ever-increasing doses of prescription opioids. There has been a 270-percent increase in VA prescriptions for four key opiates since 9/11, according to an analysis by the Center for Investigative Reporting. VA patients are twice as likely to die from accidental drug overdoses as civilians, according to a VA study published in the journal *Medical Care* in 2011. Yet opioid painkillers provide "only modest medical benefits in treating chronic non-cancer pain," a separate VA study found.

In Minyard's case, as in so many others, "the treatment regimen was as bad as the disease," says Dr. Tony Dragovich, an Army pain specialist now in private practice in Virginia who helped get Minyard off opioids.

MULTIPLE INJURIES A series of debilitating injuries led to Minyard's massive painkiller habit. The first occurred when he and other members of the 3rd Infantry Regiment spent six weeks moving piles of rubble at the Pentagon following the 9/11 attacks. He then volunteered for language school, and by the time he deployed to Afghanistan in 2004 as an interrogator he was already taking aspirin, ibuprofen, Vicodin and muscle relaxants, and was being administered epidurals for his back pain. "I was only 25," he says. "And if you looked at an MRI, I had the spine of a 60-year-old."

The injuries mounted. Minyard fell two stories during a combat operation in Afghanistan, on top of the wear and tear that comes from riding in a helicopter – the vibration in a Black Hawk is particularly hard on the spine, Dragovich says – and running around in full combat gear. He had surgery to replace two discs after he returned from that deployment. By then he was alternating between Percocet and Vicodin and should have stayed home. But because the Army was short of soldiers fluent in Arabic, he volunteered to go to Iraq in 2007.

"Looking back, that was probably one of the worst decisions I made," Minyard says. "It had a lot of ripple effects beyond my health. I left when my daughter was three weeks old."

His pre-deployment physical was a quick conversation with a physician sitting behind a desk, who asked if he "needed any meds." Minyard doesn't blame the doctor. "Probably half of the people coming to his office every day are trying to get out of deployment," he says. "And he has to deal with 500 guys who are in line behind me. He probably doesn't care about Justin and his back problems."

The op tempo in Iraq was as furious as the strain on Minyard's body. Before his unit rolled out on missions, he gave himself injections of a super-strength anti-inflammatory called Toradol. Between them, he visited the medical tent for epidurals and additional pain medications. "That was a double-edged sword," he says. It eased his pain while enabling him to continue harming his back.

Minyard's pain was severe enough, however, that he went to the doctor while home on R&R. Fort Bragg physicians told him the damage to his spine was so significant that he shouldn't return to Iraq. For him, that would have meant abandoning his platoon. "I chose my military family over my real family," he says. "I chose the military over my personal health."

The accumulated damage caught up to him. Minyard collapsed as he climbed out of a Humvee in August 2008. He was airlifted to Balad, where he sustained a concussion and additional back injuries after a nurse dumped him on the floor during a mortar attack, he says. Once home, surgeons at Duke University installed eight titanium rods to hold his spine in place – a procedure called an "anterior-posterior interbody fusion."

Before doctors could operate, however, Duke had to bring in an outside team to figure out how to treat Minyard's post-surgical pain given his high tolerance to opioids. They settled on ketamine in combination with other drugs that allowed Minyard to disengage from reality, he says. It worked. But by that time he was confined to a wheelchair and weighed 280 pounds.

For the next two years, Minyard struggled with PTSD, depression, severe cognitive challenges, the loss of his military career and anger over his injuries. He took ever larger doses of "big league opioids," as he puts it. "No one said, 'This is a problem.' This was offered to me."

Somewhere in that haze, he says he came close to killing himself.

"To go from a very successful career as a soldier to hiding out in our guest bedroom with the shades closed for weeks at a time, taking pain pills and being ashamed ... I considered taking the whole 30-day supply in one shot," he says. "It would have been incredibly selfish on my part."

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Though not unusual. Seven of his friends died in combat. Fifteen have killed themselves since coming back.

Minyard attempted to kick opioids three different times. "It was the most unpleasant, horrible, excruciating time of my life," he says. In the middle of moving to a different home, he came across an unlabeled video, popped it in the VCR, and watched in horror as his near-comatose self couldn't even help his daughter unwrap her Christmas presents. He asked his primary care physician at Fort Bragg to refer him to a pain specialist.

ACCIDENTAL DEATH An untold number of other veterans don't get the sort of help that saved Minyard. A 43-year-old retired Army veteran died four days after back surgery in the fall of 2011. The Arkansas State Crime Lab ruled the cause of death as "mixed drug intoxication" complicated by back surgery. His widow, Kimberly Stowe Green, told the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, "My husband – Ricky Green – died as a result of VA's skyrocketing use of prescription painkillers." Ricky's medication list included oxycodone, hydrocodone, Valium, Ambien, Zoloft, Gabapentin and Tramadol. This despite her husband's repeated requests that VA doctors treat the root cause of his medical problems – knee, back and ankle injuries acquired over his 23-year career as a paratrooper and military policeman – and reduce his prescription opiate painkillers, she said.

VA declined to answer questions regarding Green's case, noting that it does not comment on specific patients. Overall, the agency says it has "worked aggressively to promote the safe and effective use of opioid therapy." VA clinicians discuss benefits and side effects of

TEST DRIVE

Group sees spinal-cord stimulation, other alternatives as better way to treat veterans' pain.

When veterans seek help for pain problems, their first treatment option usually involves the most potent and highly addictive opioid medications, Justin Minyard says. Alternative treatments – without any of the destructive side effects – are last on the list.

"That's insane to me," says the former soldier, who fought his own painkiller addiction after a series of back injuries during his military career. "Why isn't the first step an alternative like spinal-cord stimulation? You can take it for a test drive. It's not addictive. It's not damaging to your body."

Spinal-cord stimulation helped Minyard stop using opioids and manage his pain. He started Operation Shifting Gears in 2013 to help combat-injured veterans quickly access alternative treatment, find jobs and deal with other hurdles in the transition to civilian life. The all-volunteer group includes a physician who looks at veterans' medical challenges holistically. "If you have PTSD, he looks at what's exacerbating your symptoms," Minyard says. "He might work with you on diet and exercise or getting enough sleep."

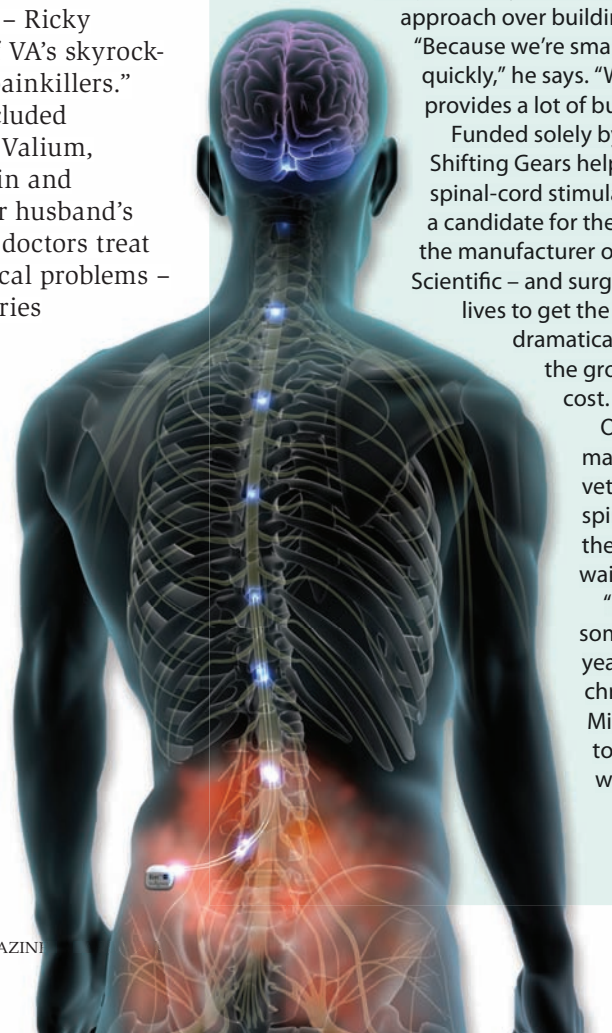
Helping veterans access nonnarcotic pain treatment, find a job or deal with other problems can be a life-and-death matter, says Minyard, who has lost many colleagues to suicide.

When a veteran turns to Operation Shifting Gears for help, the organization has a plan in place to address that individual's needs in five days, including working with other nonprofits to help veterans find jobs. Minyard values that sort of collaborative approach over building a large organization. "Because we're small, we're able to react very quickly," he says. "We fill in a lot of gaps where VA provides a lot of bureaucracy."

Funded solely by donor dollars, Operation Shifting Gears helps veterans with pain issues get spinal-cord stimulation. Once the group identifies a candidate for the therapy, Minyard works with the manufacturer of the stimulator – Boston Scientific – and surgeons near where the veteran lives to get the stimulator implanted at a dramatically reduced rate. When possible, the group helps offset some of the cost.

Operation Shifting Gears has made it possible for about a dozen veterans who were denied spinal-cord stimulation to receive the therapy. Another 30 are on the waiting list.

"You'd be hard-pressed to find someone who's served in the last 10 years who is not dealing with chronic back pain or knee pain," Minyard says. "This issue is going to get worse – and it's going to be with us a long time."



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medications with patients. Opting for opioids is "a collective decision between the veteran and their health-care team," VA says. In addition, VA connects patients and families to "pain schools," support groups and other resources.

VA has also adopted regulations aimed at reducing the risks of prescription painkiller use – a strategy it emphasized during that same congressional hearing. But VA hospitals and clinics are not adopting those changes, Green says. "They were repeatedly violated in my husband's case – and he had to pay with his life."

There are several other factors fueling the prescription painkiller epidemic, according to congressional testimony from The American Legion. Veterans can receive overlapping prescriptions from DoD, VA and TRICARE, and Medicaid or Medicare providers. Physicians often have difficulty distinguishing between TBI, PTSD and pain issues. The result is over-reliance on painkiller prescriptions. In addition, there is a significant need for prescription painkiller oversight among VA providers, the Legion says.

Meanwhile, Iraq and Afghanistan veterans who are at the greatest risk of addiction and accidental overdoses are the most likely to receive opioid painkillers from VA, according to a VA study published in 2012. This was particularly true if the veteran also had PTSD.

"People at the greatest risk of addiction and overdose are the people who are going to have the most distress from their pain," Dragovich says. "If a patient comes to you with a lot of psychological distress and a lot of pain-related distress, most physicians are going to give them opioids."

STANDARD PROCEDURE High doses of opioids became standard protocol for pain treatment in the late 1990s and early 2000s, Dragovich says. When that protocol is applied to a military base with 1 million primary care visits a year, the result is a lot of opioid prescriptions. Because young soldiers build tolerance to opioids quickly, he adds, doctors escalate the doses quickly.

Severely injured servicemembers also often come out of the hospital receiving high doses of opioids for traumatic battle injuries such as the loss of an arm or leg. Then they are faced with the excruciating work of getting off opioids for good. That's not an easy sell no matter the patient.

It took Minyard six months from his first meeting with Dragovich to agree to try the doctor's plan for helping him kick opioids. Dragovich used a drug called Suboxone to ease Minyard's transition off the painkillers. He also arranged for him to get a spinal-cord stimulator that uses electrical impulses to short-circuit pain messages before they reach the brain. He calls it a pacemaker for pain.

"(It) was like a lightning bolt," Minyard says. "I felt like this was going to be the one thing that helps turn me around." It did. Today he's out of his wheelchair, has lost 100 pounds and regularly bicycles.

The Army supports the use of spinal-cord stimulation, but there are few specialists to guide soldiers to such alternatives. Fort Bragg had two board-certified, fellowship-trained pain specialists while Dragovich was stationed there. As a result, it may take three or four years of other treatments before injured troops see someone with Dragovich's expertise.

It's also difficult to get a referral to a pain specialist in VA, says Minyard. And it's quite difficult to receive spinal-cord stimulation at VA. "You have to fail at all other treatment plans," he says. "Is failure an overdose? Or is failure when you are a full-blown addict?"

VA says it has expanded its alternative medicine offerings, and provided spinal cord stimulation to 36 patients from fiscal 2011 to fiscal 2013. Beyond that, its treatment includes "timely access to secondary consultations from pain medicine, behavioral health, physical medicine and rehabilitation," VA says.

Minyard, who is 90-percent service-connected for his injuries through VA, has charted his own recovery. He took his last opioid painkiller in October 2011. At his Army retirement ceremony in March 2012, he thanked Dragovich for saving his life. He feels so passionately about staying off opioids that he has a medical directive prohibiting the use of narcotics without his consent. And if he's unable to provide that consent, his wife has to agree to it. He tested that directive when he was struck by a truck while bicycling at Fort Bragg – an unsolved hit-and-run. But he has no second thoughts about opioids.

"I consider myself extremely lucky," he says. "I was able to push through the maze of providers ... and find the doctor who knew the secret. Many soldiers aren't so lucky, and are left to the crushing reality of lifelong opioid dependency. Or worse."

Ken Olsen is a frequent contributor to The American Legion Magazine.

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No flags for the FALLEN

Families report difficulty fulfilling 'the last thing we can do to honor our veterans.'

BY KEN OLSEN

Linda Oliveto was turned away from post office after post office shortly before Christmas 2013. She worried she wouldn't be able to help her boss obtain a burial flag for his father's funeral. Although Jim Elliott's father clearly qualified – Norman Elliott was a Marine wounded at Iwo Jima – almost none of the postal workers Oliveto contacted were aware that the U.S. Postal Service is supposed to provide flags to the families of veterans. And none of the post offices she called had any on hand.

"One person said, 'The post office doesn't have any flags – we're broke,'" Oliveto says. "One said, 'We have American-flag stamps.' We were getting closer and closer to the funeral, and I didn't know if he was going to get one."

Such frustration has become common in the past three years, says Joe Cacciola of Oceanside, Calif., a Marine Corps veteran who has conducted burials at sea for families for a quarter century. "It's gotten to a critical point where almost no one is able to obtain a flag. I think someone in charge is trying to let this program slip away."

VA distributes about 500,000 flags a year to a variety of locations, including post offices, as part of a program created by Congress in 1958. "This program was designed to make it very easy and very simple for families," Cacciola says. "You could go to a post office in Podunk, Kansas, and by law they were supposed to give you a (burial) flag."

Indeed, VA's website advertises that families of veterans or funeral directors can obtain one free burial flag "at any VA regional office or U.S. post office" with a record of a veteran's honorable discharge, a death certificate and a completed VA Form 27-2008. But there are huge holes in the program in California cities with sizeable veteran populations such as Los Angeles, San Diego and Oceanside, and parts of Oklahoma. Families frequently come up empty-handed after visiting post offices in search of burial flags, says Cacciola, who instructs his customers to go to a main post office rather than a branch.

Cacciola recently checked three post offices in Oceanside. Only one had flags, and the postal clerk told him the flags weren't available to families of deceased veterans – only funeral directors.

"We're located in a city of 185,000 situated next door to the West Coast's largest Marine Corps base, Camp Pendleton," says Cacciola, a member of American Legion Post 146 in Oceanside. "And we're located within San Diego County, which is highly populated by veterans of all the U.S. armed services. I don't think that's how the program is supposed to work."

Families who go to VA also are frustrated, Cacciola says. "Some are directed back to the post office. Some try to go through the VA application process and then don't get the flag or don't get it in a timely manner. It may take so long to get it that these burials and honors have passed."

VA said it will review its flag-distribution program after being contacted by *The American Legion Magazine* about families' frustrations. The Postal Service, meanwhile, says it doesn't receive many burial flag complaints.

"Please assure your readers that we take their concerns seriously," says David Partenheimer, USPS' media relations manager. The agency is sending a burial flag reminder to California and Oklahoma post offices and will issue a system-wide alert later this year. "Without more specific information ... I would have to say these are not typical of our experiences with funeral directors, who make up the lion's share of those who seek flags from postal operations," Partenheimer says.

But longtime Oklahoma veterans service officer John Cloud says funeral homes can be part of the problem. "I have run into funeral homes just not helping the families anymore with VA burial benefits, flags and headstones," says Cloud, who became volunteer service officer at American Legion Post 1 in Tulsa in 2010 after a 35-year career with the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs. He first noticed families having difficulty getting flags about a year ago.

Part of the problem may be an unadvertised caveat in the flag program. Less than half of U.S. post offices carry burial flags, according to USPS data. "With so many post offices so close together, it makes sense for us to create depository offices in a geographic area, but not at every office," Partenheimer says. People can call a toll-free number to find which locations offer flags. In Los Angeles, the district Mailing Requirements Office administers the burial flag program, he adds.

But Norman Elliott's family struck out there as well. The USPS employee who answered the phone at the district office put Oliveto on hold, she explained, and called several other numbers in an attempt to help her find a flag.

Oliveto finally left a message at VA's regional office in Los Angeles. When the agency called back, she was told it didn't have any flags.

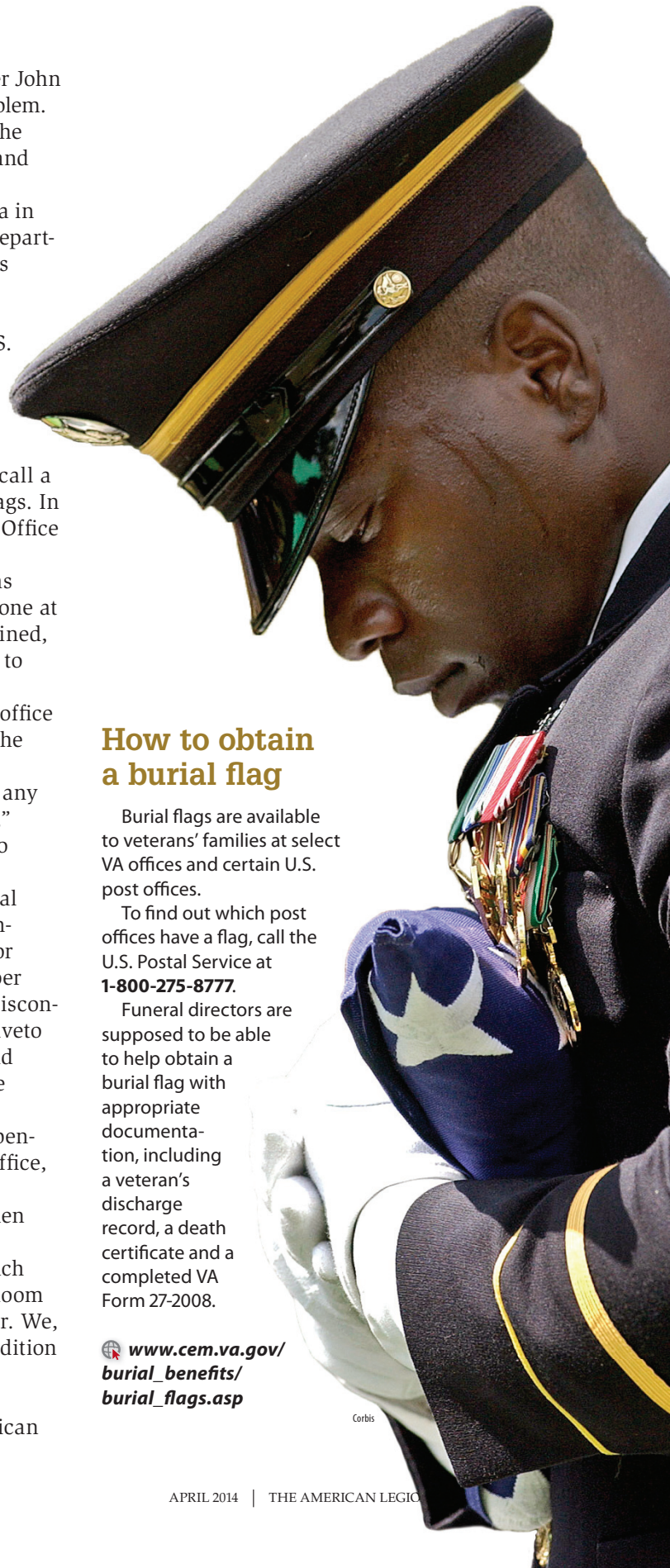
"My biggest surprise was that VA didn't have any flags – more so than that the post offices didn't," Oliveto says. "This is the last thing we can do to honor our veterans and is important."

VA acknowledges that the Los Angeles regional office should have had a burial flag available. Instead, that office gave Oliveto phone numbers for three veterans service organizations. The number provided for Disabled American Veterans was disconnected. The local American Legion post told Oliveto to call Camp Pendleton since Norman Elliott had been a Marine. The Military Order of the Purple Heart came through with a flag.

The fix is straightforward and relatively inexpensive, Cacciola says: make sure that every post office, regardless of location, has burial flags.

"This is one of those rare occasions in life when taking such simple action can actually make a positive difference in so many people's lives. Each and every flag becomes a treasured family heirloom that is passed on from one generation to another. We, as a nation, cannot allow such an honorable tradition to fade away."

Ken Olsen is a frequent contributor to The American Legion Magazine.



Corbis

How to obtain a burial flag

Burial flags are available to veterans' families at select VA offices and certain U.S. post offices.

To find out which post offices have a flag, call the U.S. Postal Service at **1-800-275-8777**.

Funeral directors are supposed to be able to help obtain a burial flag with appropriate documentation, including a veteran's discharge record, a death certificate and a completed VA Form 27-2008.

www.cem.va.gov/burial_benefits/burial_flags.asp

TECHNOLOGY

Going, going, gone

Time predicts that several devices that will "go the way of the dodo in the next half-decade," including:

Blu-ray/DVD players
Netflix will make DVD and Blu-ray players "a nice collectible right next to your VCR."

Stand-alone in-car GPS units
"In a little over six years, over 1.3 billion iPhone and Android smartphones have been sold around the world, and all of those devices have access to mapping software. Combine that with the propagation of in-car GPS systems, and it spells a swift demise for stand-alone GPS units for vehicle dashboards."

Dial-up Internet
Although "3 percent of Americans still use dial-up Internet" and "only 65 percent of Americans currently have broadband connections," the magazine notes that "Internet companies are expanding at a rapid pace, as people in underserved areas demand access to broadband speeds."

Low-end digital cameras
"The 2010 release of the iPhone 4 and its game-changing camera forced the mobile industry to step up camera quality to the point that it has rendered sub-$200 point-and-shoot cameras all but obsolete ... In five years, camera companies like Nikon, Canon and Sony will have done away with their low-end camera lines and shifted their focus to the mid- and high-end market, as the low-end market will have been completely subsumed by smartphones."

Car keys
"With benefits like keyless entry, push to start, driver profiles and remote start, buyers of newer vehicles have enjoyed the benefits of the new smart system ... But as quickly as smart keys have come on the scene, smartphones may soon replace them. With apps like OnStar RemoteLink offered by Chevrolet, which allows you to unlock and start your car with an app, the future of car keys may lie in an app store."

VERBATIM

"In both roles, she truly lifted people up and earned not only a place in our hearts, but also our enduring respect."

Former President George H.W. Bush, on the legacy of child actress and diplomat Shirley Temple Black, who died Feb. 10. She brought laughter to Americans during the Depression era, and in 1935 became Hollywood American Legion Post 43's youngest honorary colonel. Decades later, Black served as U.S. ambassador to Ghana and Czechoslovakia. Source: *The Seattle Times*

BY THE NUMBERS

The greatest threat

Defense News recently polled U.S. national security leaders on what they believe is the nation's greatest threat.

45.1 percent say cyberwarfare

26.3 percent say terrorism

14.3 percent say China

7.9 percent say Iran

TECHNOLOGY

King of the Hill

The Air Force will base its first operational F-35As at Hill Air Force Base in Utah, *Military Times* reports. The first National Guard unit to fly the craft will be out of Burlington International Airport, Vt. Hill will receive 72 F-35As, and 18 will be based in Vermont.

POW/MIA

Never forgotten

Some 83,000 U.S. service personnel are missing or unaccounted for from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Cold War, and six Persian Gulf conflicts, as *Air Force Magazine* reports, citing Pentagon data. Most of the missing – 73,000, or 88 percent – are from World War II.

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100TH ANNIVERSARY

Ahead of the pack

Virginia post adjutant has an early start on Legion's centennial.

BY LAURA EDWARDS

Bob Ferrebee grew up in Berryville, Va., then served in the Army during the Vietnam War and taught high school math. Now retired, one of his hobbies is history, from the personal – Ferrebee has family photos going back several generations – to that of Lloyd Williams American Legion Post 41 in Berryville, where he's adjutant and historian.

Thanks to his father, a World War II veteran, Ferrebee's knowledge of Post 41 is extensive. The post was founded in 1919, shortly after the Legion itself, and received its permanent charter in 1934. The first post meeting included support for a building "dedicated to the community," he says. Members agreed on a 20-year commitment to provide a home for clubs, nonprofits and other groups, completed in 1938. As a boy, Ferrebee was a frequent visitor at the building and its backyard swimming pool. "Growing up here, that was the social hub," he says.

In the mid-'80s, with a declining membership and dwindling resources, something had to change for Post 41. One member, an insurance agent, approached the Dollar General Corp., and since 1989 Post 41 has met in the basement of the building it constructed, renting out the top part to the discount store. Roughly $40,000 in yearly income pays for all the post's programs.

"I think we came out of it stronger," says Ferrebee, pointing to recent membership growth; the post has hit all-time highs for the past 11 years. Eighty percent of its members are active in post programs, and some 40 percent attend meetings. The post gives away about $20,000 a year, and to Ferrebee, that only helps Post 41's visibility. "The best way to get members is to get out in the community and show them that you're doing something," he says.

For nearly a decade, Ferrebee has been compiling Post 41's history. Among his discoveries were notebooks with meeting minutes going back to 1945, the post's original charter and a stack of purchase invoices. He's worked hard to complete a list of past post commanders, and researched the history of the post's namesake, World War I Marine Corps hero Capt. Lloyd Williams, famous for telling a French colonel at Belleau Wood, "Retreat, hell! We just got here."

Bob Ferrebee stands outside Post 41, which rents part of its space to a Dollar General store. Photo by John Napolitano

Last fall, while visiting the Legion's national website, Ferrebee saw an announcement about the organization's Centennial Celebration and followed it to the new Web platform designed for posts to upload their histories.

"I thought, 'You know, this is a worthwhile project,'" Ferrebee says. He found the site's structure and companion workbook helpful, particularly the idea of establishing a timeline. "I took all the bits and pieces I had and sat down and started putting a timeline out there with significant events and the history of the post."

Ferrebee quickly adds that Post 41's page "is still very much a work in progress. I don't think you ever complete a history." Even so, he's happy to encourage and offer advice to Legionnaires eager to build a page for their own post.

Start with some basic research, keeping in mind that "you can't put together a history in two weeks," he says. Look at documents and other information already on hand. Other helpful sources may include senior post members, local newspapers and the Internet.

Start now, because "2018 is going to be here before you know it," he adds. And remember that compiling a post history is not a one-person job. Ferrebee says he's relied on fellow post members and others in Berryville as he's gathered bits and pieces.

While Post 41 hasn't created a centennial committee just yet – "I guess I am the centennial committee right now," Ferrebee says – he considers posts' participation in this Legion milestone "very worthwhile – it helps you understand where your organization's came from and where it's going. It also makes you very proud."

Ferrebee also says he's looking forward to seeing The American Legion's history, as told through the individual stories of posts nationwide, published for veterans and their communities.

In fact, Legionnaires and communities should relish the opportunity to get involved in the Legion's 100th anniversary, he says. "I think it makes people appreciate and take pride in their organization. People see an active and vital post, and they want to be part of that."

Laura Edwards is associate editor of The American Legion Magazine.

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Learn more about Post 41:
centennial.legion.org/virginia/post41

How a Chicago Doctor Shook Up the Hearing Aid Industry with his Newest Invention

New nearly invisible digital hearing aid breaks price barrier in affordability

Reported by J. Page

Chicago: Board-certified physician Dr. S. Cherukuri has done it once again with his newest invention of a medical grade **ALL DIGITAL affordable hearing aid.**

This new digital hearing aid is packed with all the features of $3,000 competitors at a mere fraction of the cost. **Now, most people with hearing loss are able to enjoy crystal clear, natural sound—in a crowd, on the phone, in the wind —without suffering through "whistling" and annoying background noise.**

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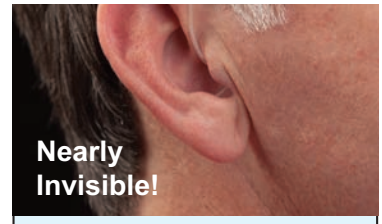
This sleek, lightweight, fully programmed hearing aid is the outgrowth of the digital revolution that is changing our world. While demand for "all things digital" caused most prices to plunge (consider DVD players and computers, which originally sold for thousands of dollars and today can be purchased for less then $100), yet the cost of a digital medical hearing aid remained out of reach.

Dr. Cherukuri knew that many of his patients would benefit but couldn't afford the expense of these new digital hearing aids. Generally they are *not* covered by Medicare and most private health insurance.



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Can a hearing aid delay or prevent dementia?

A study by Johns Hopkins and National Institute on Aging researchers suggests older individuals with hearing loss are significantly more likely to develop dementia over time than those who retain their hearing. They suggest that an intervention—such as a hearing aid—could delay or prevent dementia by improving hearing!

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COMMUNICATIONS

Get connected

The American Legion's social media galaxy continues to expand, with a Twitter following that has nearly doubled in just over a year and a monthly Facebook reach that exceeds 400,000, plus new platforms.

RETWEET AFTER ME

More than 27,000 followers get a steady stream of messages, brief updates about Legion programs, legislative alerts, and links to stories, photos and videos about the military and veterans.

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Newly created Pinterest boards are filled with patriotism, history and other inspirations.

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INSTAGRAM

This photo-sharing site gives you access to behind-the-scenes American Legion images and bonus art from events and activities covered by Legion media staff.

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FACEBOOK: HOW DO YOU LIKE US?

News, photos, videos and more stream through the Legion's Facebook pages. The biggest audience can be found on **The American Legion Online Update** Facebook page, which is dedicated to news and images.

SEE OUR FAMILY OF PAGES **www.legion.org/facebook**

PERSONAL FINANCE

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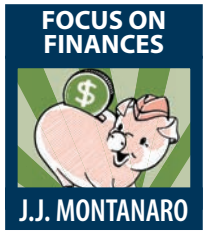
Four tax changes for 2014



This month, I'm going to take a look at some of the tax changes in play for 2014. While I won't cover them all, I will touch on a few that might affect you.

- **Foreclosure or short-sale debt is again treated as taxable income.** Forgiven debt had always been included as income on your tax return. In response to the housing crisis, Congress gave taxpayers a temporary reprieve, but that ended in 2013. Once again, a short sale or foreclosure will be accompanied by a 1099, and the canceled debt will be treated as taxable income.
- **The alternative minimum tax (AMT) is no longer a headache for most Americans.** The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (ATRA) exempted millions of middle-class Americans from the alternative minimum tax. For most, the annual threat of AMT is now a thing of the past. Good riddance.
- **There's a new simplified option for home office deduction.** Instead of calculating actual expenses, which can be a burdensome process, home business owners can use a standard deduction of $5 per square foot, with a maximum deduction of $1,500. No more tracking utilities. Even better, you won't have to recapture the depreciation (pay more taxes) when you sell the home.
- **Be aware of inflation adjustments.** Here are some of the adjustments you'll see to account for 2013's reported inflation rate of 1.5 percent:

Standard deduction – $6,200 ($12,400 married filing jointly), up from $6,100 ($12,200 married filing jointly)
Personal exemption – $3,950, up from $3,900
Social Security tax cap – $117,000, up from $113,700. Not surprisingly, this increase in the amount of income subject to the 6.2 percent Social Security tax was twice the inflation rate.
Top income level for 15 percent tax bracket – This increased from $36,250 to $36,900 (single) and from $72,500 to $73,800 (married filing jointly). This could be an important number for those planning IRA distributions or Roth conversions and aiming to remain in an advantageous tax bracket.
Retirement plan limits – Contribution limits and catch-up contributions remain unchanged in 2014. IRA limits are $5,500 ($6,500 for those 50 and older) and employer plans are capped at $17,500 ($23,000 for those 50 and older).

As the 2013 filing deadline approaches, consider these changes as you look forward to next year's tax season.

J.J. Montanaro is a certified financial planner with USAA, The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services. Submit questions for him online.

www.legion.org/focusonfinances

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ASK A SERVICE OFFICER

Children's burial at national cemeteries

Tracy L. Davis
Department Service Officer, Missouri

Q: *Can children of veterans be buried at national cemeteries?*

A: Children of eligible veterans may be buried at national cemeteries if they meet Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) dependency criteria. According to VA, a minor child of an eligible veteran may be buried at a national cemetery if he or she is unmarried and younger than 21, or younger than 23 and pursuing a full-time course at an approved educational institution.

Also, an unmarried adult child of any age of an eligible veteran may be buried at a national cemetery if he or she is permanently physically or mentally disabled and incapable of self-support before reaching 21, or 23 if he or she is pursuing a full-time academic course at an approved educational institution. You will need to provide supporting documentation showing that you are an eligible veteran, that your child is related to you, and that he or she was incapable of self-support prior to their 21st or 23rd birthday. Medical documentation confirming your child's inability to be self-sufficient is needed; written lay statements can also be used.

To schedule a burial in a VA national cemetery, visit ***www.cem.va.gov/CEM/burial_benefits/need.asp*** for instructions on how to submit eligibility documentation.

Find an American Legion service officer in your state:

www.legion.org/serviceofficers

Do you have a question for Department of Missouri Service Officer Tracy Davis about the claims process or veterans benefits in general? Send it to ***askso@legion.org.***

LEGIONNAIRES IN ACTION

MOH recipient helps make 4-year-old's dream come true

Courtesy Zizzo family

Since receiving the Medal of Honor from President Lyndon Johnson in 1968, Gary Wetzel has met nine U.S. presidents. But his biggest fan isn't a politician.

It's 4-year-old Bella Zizzo, a Wisconsin girl born with a left forearm and wrist but no fingers. "She's a strong and determined and mighty little girl," her mother, Sarah, says. "She's like a big person in a little package."

A few months ago, the Zizzo family began raising money to send Bella to Florida to attend Camp No Limits, where young people with limb loss and their families meet. Wetzel's wife, Kathy, read the Zizzos' story online, and the couple wanted to help.

Wetzel and Bella bonded quickly. Gary is an avid motorcyclist, able to ride a Harley thanks to a prosthetic arm. Because Bella's grandfathers ride Harleys, too, she may have felt at ease with him, Sarah says. She saw, too, that Wetzel had a physical difference like hers. "She's just a cutie pie," Wetzel says. "She gives you these things called hugs – they're kind of neat."

"Grandpa Gary" and "Grandma Kathy" organized a poker run at American Legion Post 434 in Oak Creek, Wis., with an after-party at the House of Harley-Davidson. Even in poor weather, more than 100 riders attended the ride.

"Gary Wetzel's Ride for Bella" raised enough money to send the Zizzos to Camp No Limits in January, where the family learned how to modify Bella's bicycle for riding. She also worked on zipping zippers and snapping buttons.

The ride raised some extra money that Wetzel suggested the Zizzos use to take Bella to Disney World, about an hour away, as a post-camp surprise.

EDUCATION

Retakes, tutorial assistance available

Q: *I am a student at a community college in Alabama, using my GI Bill benefits. My math class has been difficult, and I have a feeling I will not pass. What happens if I receive a failing grade? Is there any assistance to help me pass my class?*

A: If you fail a class, you receive what is called a "punitive grade" for that class. A punitive grade doesn't count as earned credit but is used in determining a student's progress toward graduation requirements. This means that the grade counts in your overall degree progress, albeit negatively. Since it does count toward your graduation, you are not required to repay any GI Bill money you received for that class.

You may take the class again in an attempt to receive credit toward graduation or to raise your grade, and may receive GI Bill payment for the retaking of the class. Tutorial assistance is available if you are receiving VA educational assistance at the half-time-or-higher rate and have a deficiency in a subject that makes tutoring necessary. You can be reimbursed up to $100 per month, up to a maximum of $1,200.

To apply for tutorial assistance you must complete VA Form 22-1990t. Your school certifying official and tutor must both sign the form.

Valerie Heffner is a Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 27 in Arizona. ***askvalerie@legion.org***

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Starting at age 30, **testosterone levels** decline by approximately 1% every year. By age 50 or so, a man may have lost a **full 20% of his total testosterone**, affecting both physical and mental performance via lower energy levels.

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FREE testosterone travels the bloodstream unbound, while other testosterone are bound to various types of protein molecules.

BOUND testosterone is NOT ACTIVE and therefore CANNOT PERFORM the same role as **FREE** ACTIVE testosterone!

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*Individual results may vary. These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. AMLE0314

VERBATIM

"... it was definitely lucky for the people – not so much for the Corvettes."

Jason Polk, geologist at Western Kentucky University, on a massive sinkhole that opened beneath the National Corvette Museum in Bowling Green, Ky., and swallowed eight cars Feb. 12. No one was hurt.

Sources: CNN, NBC

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GALLERY

American Legion National Commander Erle Cocke (1950-1951), a highly decorated World War II veteran, center, visits with Boy Scouts in Honolulu. American Legion photo

ACTIVE DUTY

The Coast Guard's priorities

Vice Adm. Rob Parker, the Coast Guard's Atlantic Area commander, says upgrades to the cutter fleet and development of an Arctic strategy are the top priorities for the Coast Guard going forward.

As *Defense News* reports, the Coast Guard recently christened the fourth vessel in the new National Security Cutter fleet; a fifth will enter service in 2017. Fabrication of the sixth cutter began in October, and there is funding for a seventh. There are plans for eight cutters, but the eighth is not yet funded.

"The 418-foot vessels will replace the fleet's 378-foot high endurance cutters, which began service in the 1960s," according to *Defense News*.

On the Arctic, Parker emphasized that military chiefs from several Arctic nations are urging policymakers "not to militarize the Arctic ... That's an interesting conclusion and I think the lesson out of that was, you don't want this to be a defense problem, you want this to be a governance and security problem."

He also noted the importance of replenishing the U.S. polar icebreaker fleet, which comprises just three icebreakers.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Warning signs

287 Number of times Japan was forced to scramble warplanes against Chinese aircraft encroaching on Japanese airspace between April and December 2013 – a 79-percent increase over 2012

246 Number of times Japan scrambled warplanes against Russian intrusions into Japanese airspace – a 37-percent increase over 2012

Source: Reuters

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- **Warranty** - Ask for a lifetime "no leak guarantee." The best tubs offer a lifetime warranty on both the tub and the operating system.
- **Pain Relieving Therapy** - Find a tub that has both water and air jet therapy to soak away your aches and pains preferably with a perfectly balanced water to air mix. This tub is the first to offer a specialized foot massage experience. Its unique spinning motion provides optimal therapy to feet and legs. Best of all, you get it at no additional charge.
- **Comfort** - Insist on ergonomic design, easy-to-reach controls.
- **Endorsements** - Only consider tubs that are ETL or UL listed. Also look for a tub tested to IAPMO standards and that's USPC Certified.

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NATIONAL CONVENTION

Where to stay in Charlotte

The following is a list of department assignments for hotels during the 96th National Convention in Charlotte, N.C. Legionnaires attending the convention should contact their department adjutants about hotel accommodations.

Embassy Suites
4800 S. Tryon St.
(704) 527-8400
Alabama, Mississippi

The Westin Charlotte
601 S. College St.
(704) 375-2600
Alaska, Delaware, District of Columbia, France, Georgia, Hawaii, Mexico, Nebraska, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Tennessee, Virginia, Sons of The American Legion, American Legion National Headquarters

Hilton Garden Inn
508 E. Martin Luther King Blvd.
(704) 347-5972
Arizona, Colorado, New Hampshire, New Mexico

Omni Charlotte
132 E. Trade St.
(704) 377-0400
Arkansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, Oregon

Hampton Inn Uptown Charlotte
530 E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
(704) 373-0917
Idaho, Michigan, Nevada

Hilton Charlotte Center City
222 E. 3rd St.
(704) 377-1500
California, Connecticut, Florida, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Utah, American Legion National Auxiliary, American Legion National Headquarters

Renaissance Charlotte Suites
2800 Coliseum Centre Drive
(704) 357-1414
Illinois

Doubletree Hotel Charlotte
895 W. Trade St.
(704) 347-0070
Indiana

Sheraton Charlotte
555 S. McDowell St.
(704) 372-4100
Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, North Dakota

Holiday Inn Center City
230 S. College St.
(704) 335-5400
Louisiana, Maryland, Texas, Washington, Wyoming, American Legion National Headquarters

Aloft Charlotte Uptown Hotel
210 E. Trade St.
(704) 333-1999
Massachusetts

Hyatt House
435 E. Trade St.
(704) 373-9700
Maine, Montana, American Legion National Headquarters

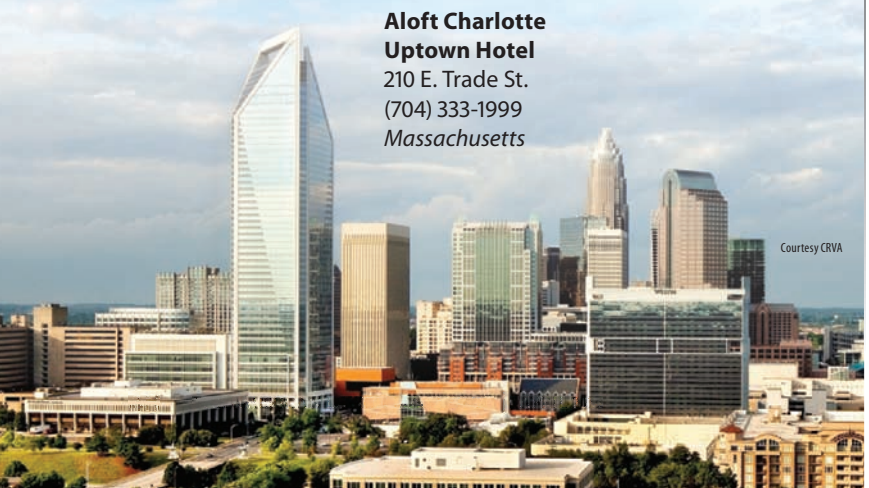
Charlotte Plaza Hotel
201 S. McDowell St.
(704) 372-7550
New Jersey, Oklahoma

Charlotte Marriott City Center
100 W. Trade St.
(704) 333-9000
New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, West Virginia

Residence Inn Uptown
404 S. Mint St.
(704) 340-4000
Vermont

Courtyard Charlotte City Center
237 S. Tryon St.
(704) 926-5800
Wisconsin

www.legion.org/convention



Courtesy CRVA

HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

Lessons of Normandy

High school and college students have the opportunity to learn lessons in leadership from the greatest generation, thanks to the National World War II Museum in New Orleans.

The museum, in association with Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, La., kicks off its next Normandy Academy class this month. Over the next couple of months, teams of students will analyze a specific leadership decision that took place in Operation Overlord 70 years ago, such as the Allies' strategy of destroying certain bridges and taking others. Another team will research the pros and cons of the decision to have Army Rangers scale the treacherous 100-foot cliffs of Pointe du Hoc. The class is good for up to three credit hours.

In June, the students will convene at the museum in New Orleans before heading to France. Highlights of the program include:

- A behind-the-scenes tour of the museum. Students will go inside a Sherman tank and take up crew positions.
- A tour of a little church in a French town called Angoville-au-Plain. Two U.S. medics used the church to treat soldiers from both sides, as long as they left their weapons outside.
- A tour of Pointe du Hoc, "one of the most popular destinations students talk about when they come back," says Nathan Huegen, the museum's assistant director for education.
- A presentation by Legionnaire Tom Blakey, a veteran of the 82nd Airborne Division who participated in the historic D-Day jump. At the museum, students will hear Blakey describe the three-day battle for a key bridge. Later, in France, they will visit the site. "They can imagine his words telling them about the flooded area, and they can look down the road as Tom Blakey did, seeing Germans approach through the scope on his rifle," Huegen says. "It becomes a powerful experience for them because they have connected with someone who was there."

Learn more about the Normandy Academy:
www.ww2museumtours.org

Read stories from the 2013 class:
www.legion.org/honor/normandyacademy

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How to submit a reunion

The American Legion Magazine publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to ***The American Legion Magazine,* Attn: Reunions, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206,** fax **(317) 630-1280,** e-mail **reunions@legion.org** or submit information via our website, **www.legion.org/reunions.**

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are publicized free of charge.

Your notice will appear on our Web site within a week and will remain available online until the final day of your reunion. Upon submission, please allow three months for your reunion to be published in print. **Due to the large number of reunions, *The American Legion Magazine* will publish a group's listing only once a year.** Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

Other notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. **We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim.** Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to ***The American Legion Magazine,* Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206,** fax **(317) 630-1280** or e-mail **reunions@legion.org.**

The magazine will not publish names of individuals, only the name of the unit. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life memberships by their posts. **This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership.** Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to ***The American Legion Magazine,* Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.**

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to ***The American Legion Magazine,* Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.** Include the listing's CID number in your response.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

AIR FORCE / ARMY AIR FORCES

2nd Avn Field Depot Sqdn (AFDS), Sevierville, TN, 10/16-19, Don Bellows, (858) 279-4156, bellowsdon@aol.com; **3rd Air Rescue Sqdn Det 1 (Korea, 1951-1952),** Branson, MO, 6/10-12, William Price, (205) 339-0960, wpprice@bellsouth.net; **47th A&E (RAF Sculthorpe, England),** Fort Walton Beach, FL, 10/9-12, Jerry Michaud, (850) 243-7570; **48th TFW (RAF Lakenheath, AFSC 462x0 Bomb Loaders, 1960-1970),** Carroll, IA, 9/26-28, Darryl White, (316) 529-8887, dmwhite209@att.net; **57th Alumni Assn (TCS, MAS, AS & WPS),** Branson, MO, 9/11-14, Woodie Hall, (239) 850-1758, alumni57th@gmail.com; **351st Bomb Grp "Mighty 8th,"** Branson, MO, 6/12-15, Deborah Eason, (478) 453-7388, dbme@windstream.net; **508th Air Refueling Sqdn (Turner AFB, GA, 1953-1957),** Pigeon Forge, TN, 9/16-18, Roy Livesay Jr., (937) 754-1090, rlivesay@sbcglobal.net; **603rd AC&W Radar Sqdn (Germany, 1960-1966),** Kansas City, MO, 9/7-9, Roger Kirby, (417) 358-3654, rakmak@sbcglobal.net; **664th AC&W Sqdn,** Bellefontaine, OH, 6/27-29, Larry Lewis, (937) 592-6787, katenlarry@embarqmail.com; **674th AC&W Radar Sqdn,** Osceola, WI, 10/3-5, Thomas Berry, (920) 358-7456, tomberry316@gmail.com; **6952nd RSM,** Las Vegas, 9/22-26, Harry Hathhorn, (208) 420-5824, harryhat2@msn.com; **Air Weather Assn,** Charleston, SC, 4/30-5/4, Kevin Lavin, (434) 296-2832, airwebassn@aol.com; **Burtonwood Assn,** Portland, OR, 10/7-12, Jim Bentley, (813) 689-0199, jbent0214@aol.com; **Heritage League of the 2nd Air Div,** Norwich, England, 5/25-30, Marybeth Dyer, (650) 355-8383, smbdyer@sbcglobal.net; **Pleiku AB, Vietnam,** Charleston, SC, 9/10-14, Harry Beam, (724) 745-9129, hbeam065@yahoo.com; **RAF Upper Heyford (1951-1993),** Dayton, OH, 9/18-21, Sherry Mills, (719) 596-5706, sherry@completereunion.com; **Strat Air Cmd Abn Cmd Cont Assn (SAC ACCA),** Rapid City, SD, 6/25-29, Rod Berlin, (937) 469-5473, rodney.berlin@ngc.com; **Thailand-Laos-Cambodia Brotherhood,** Colorado Springs, CO, 10/2-5, Joseph Wilson, (719) 310-3558, jjwilsonjr@yahoo.com; **Udorn RTAFB, Thailand,** Englewood, CO, 6/19-23, Rich Carlson, (303) 229-3203, rwc45@yahoo.com; **Wildwood AFS 5074th/1935th,** Panama City, FL, 10/16-19, Jim Fetrow, (616) 887-7783, fetrowj590@ameritech.net

ARMY

1st Bde Scouts 1st Cav Div (Airmobile) (1965-1973), St. Charles, MO, 9/25-28, Tom Kuypers, (636) 947-1617; **1st Mil Intel Bn (ARS),** Charleston, SC, 6/26-28, Don Skinner, (503) 648-6059, donsk@frontier.com; **2nd Inf Div Penn-Jersey Branch,** Lancaster, PA, 5/2-4, Jack Woodall, (610) 274-1409, warriorvet@verizon.net; **2nd Sqdn 1st Cav,** Milwaukee, 8/28-31, Tom Fey, (303) 619-7571, tomefey@gmail.com; **7/13th Arty All Btrys (Vietnam),** Chattanooga, TN, 10/8-12, Robert Adams, (859) 806-5199, 1adams08@insightbb.com; **8th Inf Div (All Yrs),** Custer, SD, 7/18-20, Rich Sonneborn, (631) 399-7709, hhc8thid@yahoo.com; **11th Armd Cav Rgt "Black Horse,"** Colorado Springs, CO, 6/12-15, Leslie Smith, (719) 635-4625; **14th Trans Bn (AM&S)(GS) (Nha Trang, Tuy Hoa/Phu Hiep, Vietnam, 1965-1972),** San Antonio, 10/23-26, Dan Quackenbush, (315) 436-0498, quack0711@twcny.rr.com; **24th Trans Co,** Fort Riley, KS, 7/18-19, Ronald Dunlap, (540) 877-3542, retread@24thtruckmasters.net; **46th Eng Bn,** Rapid City, SD, 9/11-14, MerriAnn Anderson, (616) 361-5973, merriann.anderson@sbcglobal.net; **77th Div (WWII),** Chattanooga, TN, 8/21-24, Barney Roth, (423) 877-0506; **79th Trans Co (DS) (Qui Nhon & Tuy Hoa, Vietnam, 1965-1972),** San Antonio, 10/23-26, Art Harrison, (440) 668-0019, jam1996min@aol.com; **84th & 62nd ECB (Korea),** Fort Leonard Wood, MO, 9/8-11, Carol Nelson, (401) 738-0693, cen21255@verizon.net; **87th Eng Bn,** Columbus, GA, 10/6-11, Dave Johnson, (706) 507-7700, camranh1967@yahoo.com; **88th Inf Div SE Chpt,** St. Augustine, FL, 5/5-8, Tom Lehmann, (850) 455-2106, tjlehmann0287@att.net; **94th Inf Div (WWII) / 94th Hist Society,** Arlington, VA, 6/25-29, John Clyburn, (908) 781-1406, 94thhistsociety@comcast.net; **238th Cbt Eng Bn,** Columbia, MD, 7/17-20, Jim Druck, (717) 318-2617, jim-druck@verizon.net; **335th Trans Co (DS) (Chu Lai & Dong Ba Thin, Vietnam, 1965-1971),** San Antonio, 10/23-26, Tom Peterson, (316) 650-8822, gtp001@pixius.net; **339th Trans Co (DS) (Nha Trang, Tuy Hoa/Phu Hiep, Vietnam, 1962-1968),** San Antonio, 10/23-26, Ralph Frank, (352) 527-9319, rf339ds@embarqmail.com; **360th Trans Co (Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam, 1971-1972),** Chantilly, VA, 4/4-5, Tom Berry, (316) 393-7716, tom@teberry.com; **540th Trans Co (GS) (Qui Nhon, Vietnam, 1965-1971),** San Antonio, 10/23-26, Wayne Gallant, (916) 543-4856, wayne.gallant@sbcglobal.net; **589th Eng Bn (Vietnam),** Branson, MO, 9/11-14, Nick Kallas, (918) 342-0856, nkallas@589thengineers.com; **604th Trans Co (DS) (Pleiku, Vietnam, 1966-1973),** San Antonio, 10/23-26, Ken Gurbisz, (908) 489-0806, gurbisz@verizon.net; **608th Trans Co (DS) (Dong Ba Thin, Vietnam, 1967-1972),** San Antonio, 10/23-26, Dan Sippel, (912) 876-5017, dsippel@coastalnow.net; **610th Trans Co (GS) (An Khe & Da Nang, Vietnam, 1966-1972),** San Antonio, 10/23-26, Frank Ferry, (203) 205-9021, frankgferry@yahoo.com; **614th AVEL (DS) (Nha Trang/Pleiku, Vietnam, 1966-1972),** San Antonio, 10/23-26, Frank Ferry, (203) 205-9021, frankgferry@yahoo.com; **A Btry 3rd Msl Bn 68th Arty,** Roberts, WI, 8/2, Tom Walczak, (651) 247-4848, plwalczak@comcast.net; **A Co 1st Bn 8th Inf,** Sarasota, FL, 5/14-18, Roger Gill, (508) 241-8962, roaard6@yahoo.com; **Alaska Nike Sites Vets / Cold War Conference,** Anchorage, AK, 9/4-6, Paul Kulba, (315) 440-4046, reunion@a-2-562.org; **Americal Div Eastern Region,** Wheeling, WV, 5/1-4, Terry Siemer, (614) 273-0120, tsiemer2645@hotmail.com; **Bo Co "No Slack" 327th Inf 101st Abn Inf Co (Vietnam),** Branson, MO, 9/17-21, Lloyd King, (337) 233-9555, lakgolf@aol.com; **Charlie Co 1/18 Inf 1st Div (Vietnam, 1967-1969),** Nashville, TN, 5/1-4, Tom Mercer, (865) 405-2778, pointmantom@aol.com; **D/2/16 1st Inf Div (1967-1970),** Vero Beach, FL, 6/19-21, Don Dignan, (734) 525-0157, dondignan@sbcglobal.net; **Dusters, Quads, Searchlights, Vulcans & Hawks (Vietnam),** Arlington, VA, 5/24-29, Bruce Geiger, (914) 576-1050, bmgeiger@aol.com; **F Co 52d LRRPs 1st Inf Div,** Arlington, TX, 6/11-15, Debby Douglas, (817) 401-9419, jddouglas@sbcglobal.net; **Forts Wainwright/Greely, AK,** St. Louis, 9/8-12, Paul Lucas, (302) 945-8258, pagelucas2@verizon.net; **Hamburger Hill 3rd/187 Rgt, 101st Abn Div,** Clarksville, TN, 5/12-17, Tom Martin, (856) 453-8407, tommartin9385@yahoo.com; **I Co 75th Inf Rangers 1st Inf Div,** Arlington, TX, 6/11-15, Debby Douglas, (817) 401-9419, jddouglas@sbcglobal.net; **MP Tower Rat (Physical Sec MPs),** Fort McClellan, AL, 8/7-10, Elya Loworn, (256) 310-8118, elya.lovvorn@fema.dhs.gov; **O'Brien Brks (Schwabach, Germany),** Fort Riley, KS, 6/3-8, George Patterson, (973) 470-5256, vfw2179gdp@aol.com; **QM Instructors,** Hopewell, VA, 6/7-7, Steve Shirley, (804) 446-3246, shirimpala@aol.com

COAST GUARD

All CG Reunion, Minneapolis, 8/2, Chris Kalogerson, (952) 935-9065, chriskalogerson@gmail.com; ***Courier*/VOA Memorial Foundation,** New London, CT, 6/16-21, Bob Hickman, (315) 458-5995, robert.hickman1@verizon.net; **Mackinaw WAGB 83,** Mackinaw City, MI, 8/8-10, Ginny Hull, (231) 627-9153, talltom62@gmail.com

JOINT

Chosin Few, Nashville, TN, 5/27-6/1, Don Gee, (215) 822-9093, chosinfewhq@aol.com; **Counterparts (Advisers in Vietnam),** Greensboro, NC, 4/23-26, Max Lund, (517) 356-4043, lundm@chartermi.net; **Holocaust Survivors, Rescuers & WWII Liberators**, Hempstead, NY, 6/8, Judy Vladimir, (516) 571-8040, judyvladimir@holocaust-nassau.org; **MACV,** Greensboro, NC, 4/23-26, Max Lund, (989) 356-4043, lundm@chartermi.net; ***Mayaguez* Recovery 2nd Bn 9th Mar Rgt & Supporting Naval and USAF Units,** Branson, MO, 5/14-17, Dan Hoffman, (803) 422-6842, kohtangdan@gmail.com; **Nebraska Vietnam Vets,** Norfolk, NE, 8/14-17, Bruce Bounds, (402) 841-5524, pbounds@conpoint.com; **Southern France**

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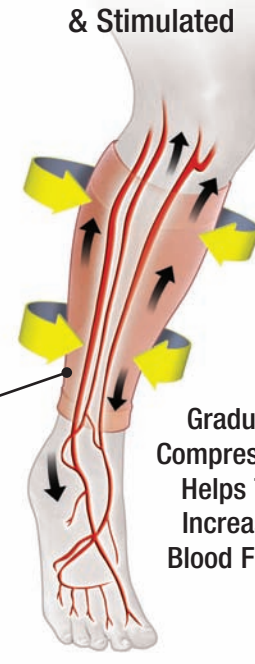

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Man blames fate for other accidents but feels personally responsible when he makes a hole-in-one.

A HUSBAND took his wife dancing. They saw a man out on the floor living it up – breakdancing, moonwalking, the works.

"See that guy?" the wife asked. "He proposed to me 25 years ago, but I turned him down."

The husband replied, "Looks like he's still celebrating."

A BOY yelled to his teacher, "I ain't got no crayons!"

The teacher smiled and tried to correct him. "You mean, 'I don't have any crayons.' You don't have any crayons. We don't have any crayons. They don't have any crayons. Do you understand?"

"I think so," the boy said, puzzled. "Teacher, what happened to all the crayons?"

WHY DO female black widow spiders kill males after mating? To stop the snoring before it starts.

AN athlete won a gold medal at the Olympics. Wanting to preserve it for his grandchildren, he had it bronzed.

ECONOMISTS have predicted nine of the past five recessions.

A HUMAN CANNONBALL decided he was getting too old to be shot into a net night after night. He went to the circus owner and said he was retiring.

"But you can't!" the owner cried. "Where will I find someone else of your caliber?"

"I'll be honest with you. The government can't get by on what you're making."

"I have nothing against dating co-workers. It's just that I've never seen you do any work here."

"This is a good idea. Let me think about it for three weeks and then present it as my own."

A WEALTHY LAWYER was having his house painted when a passerby walked up and asked if he could do something to earn a few dollars.

"Sure," the lawyer said. "Take a can of paint, go around back and paint my porch."

Fifteen minutes later, the wanderer was back. "Done already?" he asked.

"Yeah, but it's actually a Mercedes."

A TRIM-LOOKING OLDER MAN was asked how he maintained his figure. "Well," he answered, "I get most of my exercise acting as a pallbearer for all my friends who exercise."

"DURING A SPEECH YESTERDAY, Hillary Clinton said that she still doesn't know if she's running for president in 2016. You know, just like I still 'don't know' if I'll have a beer on St. Patrick's Day."

– *Jimmy Fallon*

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- Durom® Acetabular Cup

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- M2A Magnum

WRIGHT, INC.

- Conserve Cup Total Hip

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- Rejuvenate and ABG II

If you or a family member have had one or both hips replaced since **2002**, and do not know the name of the manufacturer of your hip prosthesis or replacement device, but are having problems from pain, mobility or other concerns, then you may be entitled to compensation for the defective hip replacement device. The Branch Law Firm, a nationally known law firm, is handling these type cases and specifically representing clients on a national basis regarding the following hip devices: **Depuy ASR, Depuy Pinnacle, Zimmer Durom, Wright, Biomet M2A Magnum and Stryker Rejuvenate and ABG II**. Call for a confidential interview, **1-800-828-4529** or **1-800-243-3545** and visit our website at **www.branchlawfirm.com.**

Turner W. Branch, a principal and senior partner of the Branch Law Firm, retired as a 1st Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps in 1968. He served on active duty in Camp Pendleton, California and at the Marine Corps Air Facility (MCAF) in Santa Ana, California. While at Camp Pendleton he served with the Second Battalion, Fifth Marines, First Marine Division (FMF) USMC.

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Martindale-Hubbell® from LexisNexis® 2012
Turner W. Branch, (P.A.)

BRANCH LAW FIRM®
ATTORNEYS AND COUNSELORS AT LAW

Casual Joe®

COOL NO-IRON SLACKS

360° S-T-R-E-T-C-H Waist!

Grey

XS Inseams
Waists to 60!

You'll love the comfort!

Waist gives & takes with your every move! Lightweight, quick-dry cotton & polyester!

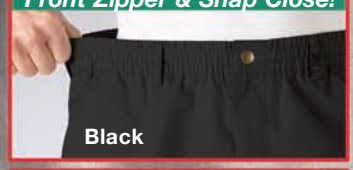
MACHINE WASH & WEAR!

- 4 Deep No-Hole pockets • Snap Closure
- Indestructible Nylon Zipper Fly
- Extra Sturdy Belt Loops
- Convenient Golfer's Locker Loop

XS INSEAMS! WAISTS to 60!

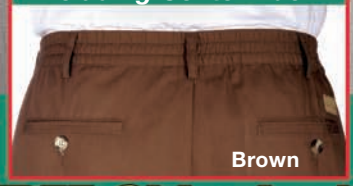
If you wonder how other men look so good, ask them about Haband! Better yet, see for yourself! Fast Reliable Service! ***Hurry!***

Full Elastic Waist with Front Zipper & Snap Close!



2 Big Side Pockets! 2 Button-Flap Back Pockets!

Belt Loops too, including Center Back!



FREE SHIPPING!

2 pairs for only 29.99* and FREE Shipping!

3 for 42.97 4 for 55.95 5 for 67.87 *New Customer Offer*

All Sizes Same Low Price!

Matching Shirts $11.99 each

Handsome vertical striping makes you look slimmer! Rib knit collar, roomy fit, handy chest pocket and banded bottom. Dyed to match the pants. Stretchy cotton/polyester knit. Imported. 100% Wash & Wear.

Sizes: S(34-36) **M**(38-40) **L**(42-44) **XL**(46-48) **2XL**(50-52) **3XL**(54-56) **4XL**(58-60)

Haband!
#1 Bargain Place
Jessup, PA 18434-1834

Haband #1 Bargain Place, Jessup, PA 18434-1834

☐ Haband! ☐ BLAIR CLASSIC ☐ Visa ☐ MC ☐ Discover® Network ☐ AmEx ☐ Check

Card # _____ Exp.: ____/____

Mr. Mrs. Ms. _____

Address _____ Apt. # _____

City & State _____ Zip _____

Phone/**Email** _____

Send _____ shirts & _____ slacks. I enclose $_____ purchase price plus ~~$7.99~~ toward postage. In GA add sales tax. **FREE Shipping!**

SLACKS *2 for $29.99**

	7EA–Ø75C1	WHAT WAIST?	WHAT INSEAM?	HOW MANY?
Ø6	GREY			
Ø1	BLACK			
2E	KHAKI			
Ø4	BROWN			
5J	CADET BLUE			

Imported

SHIRTS *$11.99 each*

	7EA–13451	WHAT SIZE?	HOW MANY?
Ø1	BLACK		
EB	BURGUNDY		
2E	KHAKI		
Ø5	BLUE		

FOR MAXIMUM COMFORT, ORDER YOUR USUAL WAIST SIZE!

Waists: 32 34 36 38 40 42 44

***Big Men** ($5 more per pair): **46 48 50 52 54 56 58 60**

Inseams: XS(25-26) **S**(27-28) **M**(29-30) **L**(31-32) **XL** (33-34) (XL inseam ***available in 32-44 waists only***)

100% Satisfaction Guaranteed or Full Refund of merchandise purchase price.

When you pay by check, you authorize us to use information from your check to clear it electronically. Funds may be withdrawn from your account as soon as the same day we receive your payment, and you will not receive your check back from your financial institution.

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